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Australia's magazine of the performing arts

August 1978 \$1.50

Theatre Australia

John Waters Interview
Australian Shakespeare
Quentin Crisp
The *Baron*

Comprehensive Review Section
including Film, ballet, opera,
records, books, National
Guide

JOHN WATERS
45
DRACULA -

BERKOFF
SPEAKS
OUT

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Centrepoint Theatre Palmerston North
Tuesday 10-Saturday 14 October
Coast Theatre Christchurch
Friday 20 and Saturday 21 October
Downstage Theatre Wellington
Tuesday 24-Saturday 28 October
Fortune Theatre Dunedin



Theatre

August 1978
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Australia

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#COMMENT#

They're not making a song and dance about it, but the Melbourne Theatre Company is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. In 1953 the Union Theatre Repertory Company started life at the University of Melbourne and played on at first six years in the Union Theatre Australia's oldest professional repertory company has come a long way since those days, and in spite of a certain amount of criticism of its stronghold on Melbourne theatre, must be counted the largest and most successful state theatre company — particularly in view of what is happening in its Sydney counterpart the Old Tote, this year.

1977 was a year of some success for the MTC — and some expenditure. It co-produced the *Advancers Theatre* a theatre twice the size of either Russell Street or St Martin's in which they were primarily playing. It was converted from a cinema hall into what had a record as a mainly unsuccessful live venue, and for a time the MTC were playing in three of Melbourne's theatres at once. The venture was a risky one and depended for its success on substantially higher boxoffice, but the season of *Samuel Lewis* dressed flames, of which *Samuel's* *Advancers of Fire* was the biggest drawl proved the effort and expense was justified.

Last in the year the MTC's new headquarters were complete enough for them to move into, this was a huge warehouse in South Melbourne converted into administration, rehearsal, scenery building, costume making and storage space at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Victorian Government. There were some dark complaints made at the time that even the old St. Martin's, Alexandra building, and operations posed as to whether this would lead to a manufacturing rather than liberalised outlet for the company.

So far this doesn't appear to have been so. 1978 has turned out to be one of the most successful years, an artistic revival and box office boom that the MTC has not had since *Samuel* the founder and continuing artistic director, saw through last year's changes and is away on long leave from this year. The improved critical response to 78 may be due to a fresh and new inventory approach to productions, but there is also the possibility of particular, if unconscious personal proclivities towards *Samuel* himself, that is a less conspicuous or oblique.

For all the congratulations John Sumner has received in himself as the running of the company, the motivation and aims of the MTC is very much due to him. Of all successful decisions in this country that is so far the largest and most assured role, and must be deemed the most successful. He combines efficient administration with artistic direction in a way that few others have matched. Even as *Samuel* these responsibilities are divided between three decisions and a general manager.

In the absence of its artistic director, Mark Rader, with Ray Lewis, is the man who has been most or less at the helm of the Melbourne Theatre Company this year. His previous production for the company have been generally successful — mostly last year's *John* at St Martin's — and in March has scheduled *Samuel* based *Richard III* made months into the city of MTC classical productions. Currently he has *Arbitration's* *Just Between Sisters* running at Russell Street and *Under Milkwood* at the Advancers. Rader's artistic development is somewhat in demand having just been requested artistic director of the Playwrights Conference for the second year running — the first time this has happened in the history of the Conference. The other new director of the year some who to be excellent choices for the MTC. *Frank* Haines' two productions have gone down more than well, and Bruce Myles is proving in good a director as he is a writer.

The MTC has moved sharply to the forefront of encouraging new writers in 1978 with its recently inaugurated *Theatre Production*. From April to June *Advancers* has been running that programme which gives readings and workshops to new work from Australia and overseas, particularly that which is innovative in style. Many of this year's season have come either directly from the Playwrights Conference or from writers who have previously been involved with it, so perhaps Mark Rader's involvement with both is playing dividends at each end.

Critic invasions has also been happening through morning. The Club which has for a short last month to pulled levers at Russell Street last year moved to *Tasmania*. And *One Flat Sun* and *PI* was not taken over by, but produced in conjunction with *Paradise*. Productions especially for the purpose of a nationwide tour.

Three season series for 1978 looks well for the upcoming programs of the MTC. The choice of plays runs from *Black's The Resurrection of Anwar Ali* in *Arrows* and *Old Love*, taking in *David Allen's* *Good With Words*, and a couple of more West End successes.

The MTC was planning a costume exhibition to coincide with the annual inventory, but it looks as though this will be postponed. In an equally quiet way that month *Curse* Press celebrates its twentieth year of operation. With a hefty rack list in Melbourne as they are making the season with their fine stocktaking sale. *Curse* is offering trading sets to theatre and drama groups of eleven titles is one price for delivery anywhere in Australia, they include *Walters's* *One Party* and *Shogun* of *Paradise* *Black's* *Arrows* *Towers* and *Samuel's* *The Flying World*. It's also *Theatre Australia's* second birthday, and as we move into Volume three.

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SPOTLIGHT



John Waters as Dracula

Photo: Patrick Jones

John Waters — the new Dracula

Jill Sykes

Why is John Waters, in view? Australian film's asked a friend the other day.

He has a lot to answer. But to start, turn up on television and cinema screens with happy regularity — *Jack Elton Jones: The Coming of Wisdom*, *Summerfield*, *Workshop of Shadows* in the last three years alone (plus a couple of television, already seen and two more in the air). Now he is looking for what should be Australia's next export on stage as Dracula, not the waterlogged monster of the film, but the original (comic) Dracula of the London stage.

The \$100-200 production, which opens at His Majesty's Theatre in Sydney on August 10, is being directed along the lines of the current Broadway hit by Sir Robert Holman for P.C. Williamson Productions and Michael Eglitz International.

Last October, *Beau Bridges: Dracula* was revived in New York, earning strings of superlatives from the critics. Waters, who has seen the New York production, says it is

superbly staged and has an amazing collection of special effects. "His original Victorian setting has been moved to the twenties," he said. "But there have only been minor changes of dialogue. There are marvelous lines like 'Boring your daughter here' and 'I suspect anyone and everyone.' It walks on a razor edge, it is high melodrama without going over the top. It maintains a feeling of celebratory as well as being very funny and played with great wit. It has music, but it is in no way a musical. The music is more like a film score — dramatic punctuation music. 'Dracula' is a romantic figure, very elegant, a romantic being. Every one there supported each other."

To go back to my friend's original question: the reason that John Waters is so demanded as an actor would seem to be the ability and (indifference) with which he approaches his job, and his strong, almost no-good looks. Here's he doesn't go around ferociously chasing career opportunities and not continually couldn't suggest his rampant working pattern came about by chance, though when he talks about his career that is what it sounds like.

He was born in England thirty-one years ago and grew up in the north. His father is an actor and one John fell into the business without even thinking about it. "When I was coming up to leaving school, I was desperate to try other things. Acting was a burning ambition — yet it was something I knew I would probably not be doing. I worked in various little jobs — temporary jobs like mowing lawns — and was temporarily a person who took odd jobs to keep himself going. In 1963/64, I was bus grinding and vapor with a pop group, the Red Squad. We got about 4 points each for a gig."

My first professional theatre job came in 1965 at the Richmond Theatre, which was close to where I lived. It was a series of Shakespearean plays. I was an assistant stage manager who earned a wage. "When I spent a year in France, selling postcards on the beach, back home."

"I have never changed my approach to life. I still consider that I am just taking what comes up. I now have other people like agents to plan my career. But it work suddenly stopped — and every actor faces that possibility. I would simply do something else. I am not worried when I am out of work — though I am a little bit fidgety."

I wondered if he was at all worried about over-exposure with such a successful screen career. "I

think it is very good timing for me to do a play now — he replied. "I suppose I have reached a non-saturation point with movies, though I really don't think there is a real problem with over-exposure here because there are still things among Australian audiences that you get lost in a particular classic. "When I was doing *Himself*, you could get paid in two episodes with only two weeks between them, whereas in England there has to be a separation of something like two months. There is a smaller pool of actors here, so they are bound to come up more often. In England, if you want a middle-aged, bespectacled doctor, you open your file and there are hundreds of them."

In the last years since he arrived in Australia on a 10 months' student passage (during his night spent a two-year working holiday here, he has done shows like *Ham*, *Jarvis*, *David v. David* and *William Living in Paris*, *Godolphin* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* all of them requiring his singing skills. As a singer, when he has done television songs such as *Madness*, *Devil on Four Cycles*, *Woman* and *The Man*. Recently he turned up by chance with a couple of songs on *Marcel Hersh* program — he was her on the number at the ABC, and she turned him down.

And then there have been plays, but most of them are quite a long way back. I saw him in his most recent stage appearance — with the Old Toss in *Comer and Cleopatra* last year. He has a pleasing stage presence, but it seemed odd to see him as a distant figure framed by a proscenium when you're seated determined to see him up close. He must be right up there in close up on a movie screen.

The special techniques of film and stage are so different," Waters commented. "The camera will pick up your thoughts, whereas there has to be physical and physical on stage. I think the energy level required for Dracula is almost all a mental thing. He is talked about for twenty minutes before he appears and when he does, he must be right up there. He has to maintain that. Stage work means a very disciplined, almost robotic, manner. Physical fitness and endurance are prime requisites. Film making is very spacious, too, but when you are doing a play your concentration and your effort is expanded into two hours and your whole day is geared to that. You have to stop drinking and eat drink the drinking."

He smiled finally as he called himself another export.

Quentin Crisp — an artist in life

John Byrne

"Could you meet for lunch darling? I'm afraid it's the only time left!"

Perhaps James, PR for Quentin Crisp's current tour of Australia (that no need to be apologetic — it is not everyday that one can meet a legend in his own hemisphere. Legend is of course, constituting a title, but perhaps Mr Crisp has more claims to it than many others in this age of theoretical hyperbole, where epitaphs of "internationally acclaimed" and the like are thrown around like confetti. In a very few short years he has risen from almost total obscurity as a semi mad writer, model (the Naked Civil Servant of his books) to his present celebrity, at least in Britain and I am sure I will be able to say, so Australia before he is through. Not that this has been an overnight success, for he has been twenty years putting his show together. Assorted episodes of the progress of Crispian do tend to take a little longer to prepare than others, and

We can discount the fact that his book, *How to Survive* was referred to in the aforementioned States of America as a "how-to book for losers." We can even laugh at Mr Crisp's surprise that his other book, *Love Most Gay* was badly received as New Zealand "where I thought they would be glad of anything." The fact is that Quentin Crisp in his own mind, described as "an extreme or convoluted debate" gathered the sort of crucial audience by hard to please West End clubs that make free of house managers beam with pride and bring out the sandwich trays.

Mr Crisp turned a few heads as we walked down from Sydney's Theatre Royal to the Westmeads and shops but not many in the London of the 80s it was a different matter. Then Bill Douglas type revelations of the past were the rule followed by abuse and plans, physical attack. Effeminate homosexuals were hated and dyed hair painted nails and outrageous clothes were not acceptable then but now the world has caught up with him in many ways. He is aware of a large of the things people seldom tell him when they are here. Then to live at all was a "kind of triumph" and he was often off on the poverty line. Today he is widely accepted and lauded on his own terms and he is becoming increasingly relieved of material want. The power of money is important to him however "only useful as a personal aid in considering a victim." He has come "theoretical seyns" but no literature — in his mind such feelings are not productive and besides "they stop you talking."

His appearance today is rather like that of a benevolent, maternal figure, she has a soft smile that she has discreetly made up with



Quentin Crisp

pinkie, hand and eye line. He does not agree with a pale pink suit and apart from a stylish black chapeau in the style of the great English courtesans, somewhat like an haute couture designer's hat, his clothing strikes out as rather conservative. But for the make up, one feels that he could almost get away with having one and only colour with the *Riviera Nude*!

It is a gentle piece, by today's standards where not only pop performers grow an outrageous mass of green and purple hair, feature facial dissection and vast amounts of jewellery placed on parts of the anatomy where even he had not thought to place it. In short, the young, career really understood what his struggle was all about.

There will be money, I am sure, who will expect him to pursue the woman's point of view but this is way off the mark. His point of view is quite simply his own and it owes nothing particularly to either sex. He is an academy of one. Nor is his show aimed at a homosexual audience. Moreover, and this too may surprise you is not a predominant part of his professional theme at all unless the audience turns it as that discussion during question time which comes as part two after he talks on style.

To Mr Crisp style is all and nothing else matters. He knows the lack of rights in the world today — the homosexuals, I mean when they refuse? the Sex Pervers the leaders Douglas and says that this is due partly to the fact that there is too much freedom. The sort of individualism we see today is not your grandiose grandiose type but pulled on from the many alternative lifestyle choices freely available and admired. It is not a direct and inevitable and consequence of what one study is, Mr Crisp had no such choice forced on to himself, he forged out his lifestyle accordingly. He is, in the champion of individual life in progression for any other

kind of life be a gay, woman or otherwise) to suggest ways in which we may begin our own brand of individualities and be happy with ourselves. It is not, he says a question of setting ways in which to be different from other people, but rather one of being more like ourselves. To "work from the inside out" rather than vice versa.

Then may order you as an unrepentant counsellor of the great singularity, and his subversive approach may be called in by the media, which here and there are two millionaires, which lifestyle you enjoy? but I can assure you that in his hands it has a breadth of meaning and application that will surprise, provide and make you think. It may sound too like a pretty heavy meeting in the theatre, but that is my fault. Few have the ability to speak with a serious intent in an entertaining way. Mr Crisp has it. "I don't have to be boring in order to be believed", and again quoting *Shirley* "just because I'm boring, don't imagine I don't mean what I say."

At the same time, he was just about to leave for Barbados where he opened his Australian tour but before he left he had to appear in a performance at Dame Edna's (as that he might come in more to the psyche of Dr. He did expect a certain amount of bad press at the Queensland capital though it is certainly not his intention to offend. He was however not greatly nervous — "I have nothing to lose. Understand that there is I am sure a large amount of homophobia. History can be more or less understood (perhaps tolerance and honesty have characterised Mr Crisp's recent life. It would be very surprising if the audience at H. M. Theatre in Barbados did not come, as it did from my audience — with the previous feeling that they had seen a remarkable and very likable man. In fact if he was appearing here in Adelaide it would unfortunately mean that for this year's national living treasure award.



Playwrights Discovered

Richard Murphett

In February the Australian Performing Group advertised in the national press for playwrights to apply for three, seven development grants of \$2,000 each, provided by Lotteryland, Board Funding. The aim was to spread the money as widely as possible to attract the attention of writers with an interest, but little or no experience, in writing for the theatre, as well as those with completed scripts. For the writers we asked for either completed scripts or synopses, with the condition that the writer felt willing and able to work with the group on developing the play if this was necessary and because we offered no help in development of the scripts or advice about them. The condition acted as a spur to the majority of the applicants. As one writer from a town in Western Australia put it, "I've had to write for theatre, if you haven't had a grasp of the actors." And the failure and persistence, evident in most of the writing, were largely a result of lack of working knowledge of how to stage the material in live action. This led to either an excessively protracted conclusion in a soliloquy or a disorienting question and answer dialogue which got the theoretical while systematically crushing the play or leaving details of a character and plot which drove the central spirit of an idea. What does, writers need is contact with a theatre, company or a chance to see their work performed. Of the playwrights we have chosen only one has had a full length play professionally produced in Sydney and only one has completed as much as a first draft of a script to full plan.

There was great diversity of style and content in the work submitted — from satirical comedies to historical pageants from Dick Parrell to the 1930s, from the surrealism of a lot of fantasy ground covered in various ways and some, though the writer has confidence for a few verbally professional theatre companies.

The recipients of the grants are:

Barry Dickson for his play *Fool's Shoe Meet Me Dickson's* plays have been performed at La Mama and the Pantom Factory under private backing. *Fool's Shoe Meet* is a boxing theme for old actors. It shows a retired boxer coming to a second in spirit in a new old first woman, a talking dog and other left wing paraphernalia of the venerable world. It is a world of complete performance vying with complete pleasure in word play, besides the provided by the sad mental confusion and petty obsessions of old age. As Mr Dickson says: "There is nothing to sad, its political and its impressive; as it shows pink messages at heart in the morning." *Fool's Shoe Meet* will be produced at the Pantom Factory in August/September this year.

Stephen Sewell for his play *The Dead Wood*. Mr Sewell is a Queensland writer who has had a play produced recently at La Mama. *The Dead Wood's* theme is the return of politics after many years in a superstate which have destroyed the theory and practice of the party and a working for Anna an anarchic person fights and Alexander a young individual is forced on the run from the Russian secret police and caught in a barn on Main occupied Northern Russia in 1941. The play is excellent but the material of hard dramatics is an obstacle for the kind of an actor chosen and all the sharp wit and sharp language that it displays in terms of action. *The Dead Wood* will be produced at the Pantom early next year.

Weigh the third grant between

Stephen Munn for his planned play *My Life My Children*. Mr Munn's first play *Playboy* was shown at the Pantom in 1978. In *My Life My Children* he is intrigued with the huge change that the second world war wrought on Australian family life, particularly on Australian women who were the first to find and spread the effects of the first cultural impact that was not from Britain and that had unexpected impact — Australian cultural adaptation.

Terry Maher for his planned play *Wood As Come On*. Mr Maher is a Melbourne journalist. *Wood As Come On* deals with white collar worker and the hopes and loss of an ambitious, innovative. A kind of middle class Catholic, suspicion, tragedy it is modelled on the closely written, one and full of one of our recent financial system.

These two plays will also be produced at the Pantom next year. In addition we are negotiating with several other writers with a view to full production of their work or its inclusion in public workshops and playmaking (a formation planned for 1979).

The seven development grants make an initial process of what the APG does all the time — the making and discovery of new material. The process was simple and the material valuable. And we hope that for these, many writers will whom we have not contacted it has been tentatively of far more use, than making first step of the work scripts or bringing long, untried ideas to us for the first time.



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You win some...

Richard Fotheringham on Queensland's reaction to the Popular Theatre Troupe.

It was a quarter to eight in the morning, and the caller had rung from a private number whose nature would overrule. "The police want to interview asking for information about the Popular Theatre Troupe," the voice said. "I thought you ought to know".

A year later, another phone call. Some of our members had performed at a Civil Liberties Rally in Brisbane's Festival Hall. This time it was the Queensland Department of Cultural Affairs ringing, asking if it was our company which had been involved. It was the only time the Queensland Government had approached us on any subject, and in April this year the token amount \$2000 we'd requested from their reluctant coffers was withdrawn.

In 1976, our problems started in Brisbane in 1976. The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union had asked us if we would perform after an early morning soap work starting at that stadium primarily. It seemed appropriate to me to show *The Millionaire's Handicap* with the treatment of Aboriginal people by the Cape York shambles mining companies, so we agreed. It was one of our best moments, sitting up at 4 am while a thousand men stood nearby discussing their dispute with the company and what they'd voted to strike. Finding the 600 of them were prepared to endure drinking tea for another three quarters of an hour to watch our show before going home.

The repercussions were immediate. The local catholic press described a looking we'd made in his hall for a public performance, we were suddenly denied access to the pavilion where a show had been arranged and throughout Queensland we lost our company industrial allies who had heard of us and who were out of their way to obstruct our right to perform to their workers. Some weeks later, the first protest of police surveillance began to appear.

The Popular Theatre Troupe is an eight member professional theatre company based in Brisbane which began in 1975 with the original production of *The Millionaire's Mission*, a study of racism in Australia directed by Albert Hume.

It was part a society morning where whites men preached Christianity and preached goodness, and part variety show where Aboriginals were ridiculed out of their land and patronised to death. The contrived production was the Troupe's invitation to perform in the

1976 Adelaide Festival of the Arts, and later had a success at London season.

In London, they are racism play about racism on the world stage, a male dancer performs a rape trick.

Trouper: Now watch carefully. See that one? Notice that a few are hands reaching behind as the being and reaching up the clothes. This is because it is a rape made by a female dancer. Notice also the crowd watching the rape through collar, and the up-down through below. Note that there is nothing on this but. (Turns the body upside down a subtle left and right) that it always a few silly incidents who believe women should have the same right to work as men. (Turns down, smiles) There is now nothing on the but. I place the coat in the box, turn around three



Popular Theatre Troupe's *Millionaire's Handicap*

times say the stage words "lets let men only dress more money for men only" and they proceed to our new coat brought watching, a tall white and sturdy figure, knowing it's a coat made by a male tailor. (Turns around, applauds) respect the female culture and the employees agree to employment, men in this industry!

This show seems a good example of the way in which the Popular Theatre Troupe has tried to explain historical and contemporary equations in terms of popular entertainment. Because we've avoided whatever possible formal theories with all their usual explanations, we've had to devise our soap opera treatment as strong enough to hold an audience in the obscuring surroundings of a weekend a barbecue at a picnic compound. And since we present our facts carefully, avoid giving obvious offence by the use of bad language (and support no political party) we've tried to have the courage to present arguments to anyone.

But it is also true that our shows are factual representations of some of the most heinous aspects of Australian life and if they work as

they should then they will educate people whose entrenched attitudes and propensity towards the suppression of those facts. *The Millionaire's Mission* for example deeply shocked the people in a hotel (among others) as the central Queensland town of Emerald. They'd just recently voted their Aboriginal position by having the police round up every black at town and putting them on a goods train to Mount Isa. They were politely appreciative of the show — it's hard to take open offence at good quality presentations — and it was only when we tried to arrange a return tour a year later that a sympathiser told us why we'd met with a blank refusal.

You lost a few, you won a few. We were doing *The Millionaire's Handicap* for a Permanent League meeting in Brisbane. We were going to begin, and the permanent meeting was taking place. A fierce and stormy staff had been working against the continued refusal of state and federal governments to provide funds for the League. Some Cramer's Crap — which the we thought deserved as "fory maintenance" — got substantial funding, but Permanent League got not one penny, a million more, which earlier expressed some frustration about performing our play in such circumstances suddenly pressed and moved to me. "The thing I keep forgetting" he said "is that the world really isn't the way they try to tell you it is".

If the work of the Popular Theatre Troupe is widely committed, no commitment is sustained up by that fact. If we're subversive then it's because we are doing the new the people decide. But there social problems a one way and taken out of given in Queensland that's suffered cause to be denied, ignored, locked out, standard unchanged defined, sped again, and economically crippled. Fortunately we also to be spiritualized, supported, challenged, inspired with and understood.

Richard Fotheringham has been a writer and director with the Popular Theatre Troupe since its inception.

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“QUOTES & QUERIES”



ROCKY HORROR HORRORS?

Queensland Theatre is coming in shock. The world's Higha Company has suddenly seen the shippers in the commission's hand: the Popular Theatre Troupe has had its 1989 production withdrawn. The Queensland Theatre Company's secretary informs: "proposals were withdrawn by the Education Department and various language policy complaints (noted teachers from Monro said that the extracts from *Orlando* suggested parody). When you enter these questions in the shade into the hidden colleges of the Rocky Horror Show, with the Freud Squad being called in, and a lot of innocent people suddenly finding themselves little for huge impact bills."

The unfortunate fact is that Rocky Horror was staged by G & M Productions in the old Radio Theatre in Brisbane's suburb of Wiggly East, opening on May 30 for a six-week season run. The show was directed by Bryant Mason, and provided work for many of Queensland's unemployed actors and technicians. There were doubts about the financial success of the production early in the season, when a reference to Mason for his directorial by himself in a newspaper and his director. The actors were paid for the first four weeks of the run, but were told on the Friday of the fifth week that they wouldn't be paid that day. The show folded the next Monday and a morning of creditors on Tuesday 18th June began to press together for the available story.

Apparently G & M Productions was formed by Graham McLachlan, who was the Productions Manager at the Queensland Theatre Company. He claimed to have written a book — allegedly two books — from

Melbourne that put in only a thousand dollars to go back. It's also alleged that McLachlan financed the venture by using a Queensland Theatre Company order book to get credit, and told several QTC personnel that the Queensland Theatre Company had "QTC" share involvement. McLachlan was given leave of absence from the QTC and was later sacked.

The producers' meeting put G & M's total debts at a very conservative \$20,000, with \$10,000 being increased as a more realistic figure. The QTC is the major creditor, other financial lenders are Harry M Miller (English), Radio Station 4TF (advertising) the Queensland Radio Association, the Radio owners (state) the support for the incredibly large champagne and food disaster opening night, the actors and technicians, and those who'd paid for advance bookings.

McLachlan has left town. It looks like the Queenslanders were right for the picking."

HALF A TICK

HELEN HARRIS

"The idea started in America, when Stephen was in New York last year he noticed the queues in Times Square at longlines for half price tickets for that day's performances and thought what a good idea it was. It has been slow taking off in Sydney starting last September. Everyone who heard of it thinks it's the best thing that ever happened but we can't advertise until we're making more money! The idea we have done has worked very well. It would be financially viable if we were doing double the business we are now."

We cater for theatre lovers who can't afford the normal prices — and there are a lot of them. We ring the theatres in eleven cities each morning to find out what would reduce their ticket price for us to sell at half price for that night's performance. On Friday we do it for the whole weekend. The only ones who don't work with us are the Australian Ballet — although they don't have full houses every day, and the Ringier. We're keen on the MLC series who have very kindly found us a bank, and now we're at the Maxwell Theatre Half A Tick is really a community service, to begin to sell. What we make out of it is the normal looking for."

ILL UNINATIS CONTROVERSY

KEITH GALLAGHER, Chairman of ACT

Remember the situation & F play by Eric Campbell and Chris Langham was to be staged by the APG in the Space in the 1991 Festival of Arts is all told through SA's Association of Community Theatres extended in November this year to present at least four new plays by

ACT member groups and writers in the Space. However Tony Farrow of the Festival Centre suggested that ACT undertake *Alternatives* if possible using Campbell as director and that the Centre would back the whole deal. It was at this respect a generous offer towards the amateur and some professional members of ACT, but when John Kelly of the Festival Centre reported that negotiations were under way to get Campbell out here negotiations were not in fact that far advanced. He added that the Festival Centre was not happy with the standard of previous ACT seasons in the Space. This surprised me since I estimated a great deal of work from local theatre people. In the meantime ACT unanimously decided to go ahead with its original plan and therefore reject Farrow's offer, thinking a better to back local groups and local playwrights at a time (1) mean SA playwrights is flourishing and can learn the names Ken Ross, David Allen, Malcolm Pascoe, Bob George, and Steve Spears all of whom have had great credit support from ACT and its members and (2) when it has become increasingly expensive for groups to mount productions even given the Queensland Government's generous theatre rental subsidy scheme. Kelly's response in the *Mail* to all of this was a charge of parochialism and this happened to coincide with (1) Alan Roberts' account in the *Advertiser* of a "dozens of good local plays" and (2) Actor's Equity giving two important motions through the local ALP conference, both sponsored by Democrat (an Equity member) himself and both in support of local amateur theatre. Add to all of this a dash of local hostility to the dominance of the theatre scene by English people that reducing the aforementioned critical particularly in the SAEC and you have an understandably tense situation. Contrary to the opinion of Roberts and Kelly, ACT feels that there is a great potential in the local theatre scene which needs nurturing and seeing that ACT is the only organisation in SA seriously concerned with local theatre, a real chance to act in that nurturing allowing writers to have play read workshops and produced thus allowing them to learn and the opportunity to learn through members.

SACKCLOTH AND SWEAT

MURRAY COPLAND

"It is a matter to be given a chance to rethink and redirect my view. I agree for the Melbourne Theatre Company. I know there were many who saw my original production at the 1994 Adelaide Festival who felt as I did, that Robert Farrow's intention towards ambivalence of an amazingly different rules — rules as well as goals — derived as far more

mainly men. How fortunate we are that Robert is available for our spot in August which is when David Browne, of the MTC's regular company, has just enough time free between shows to appear in eleven performances as the other half of the busy two-man team. Those who think of David as typically the handsome guy (and he is in a surprise when they're confronted by his marvellous appearance in *Changeling*) — for what its director has in common is not only their inconspicuous signs in the most outlandishly bewily macho of modern European drama but also the largest life-size fantasy of their characteristic.

The production won't be by any means a carbon copy of my Adelaide original. It will be the first full production mounted in the old Art Gallery upstairs at the Artforum Theatre — the spot which the MTC's existing and upcoming programme of 'Encounter Productions' has made its own. So this version of *Changeling* can be even more intimate and immediate than before, and I want to try on even rougher, quasi approach by the way, those who are shocked but better stay away — the moderns could be very blasé! Backlash and sweat will be the bywords. After all those are supposed to be important constituents clanking up an audience from a comfy medieval mode.

Several people have already asked me if the costumes will be as sexy as last time. I can't make any promise but we'll do our best.

FIRST OF SPECTACULAR TO EDMBURGH

JOHN STREHLLOW, Director, Third Stage Alliance.

"We are a company based in Adelaide which specialises in performing to children and young people. Our work has been involved to be performed in schools and involves extensive direction of movement, lots of music, virtually no props or scenery, fairly basic costumes. To date we have performed two plays to primary age children, the stories of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *Shakespeare's* plays to high school children, currently we are performing a new look fairy tale to teenagers which uses many of the techniques of our past work plus a few innovations into the area of music. The company was formed in 1975 as a result of a School Commission grant, which has been virtually the only grant of any size we have received. Recently we were funded by the S.A. Arts Council thanks to the success of Arnold Doolittle in our work, which is directly in the area of school."

We are performing at the Edinburgh Festival this year, and have been informed by the Administrator, Mr Alan Moffat, that we are the first Australian company to do so. We are financing ourselves in that instance — as indeed in all others — and we cannot so far know the impact our work will receive as a result of initial and in the future. The two children's

plays are being done as a double bill. — *An Australian Night's Spectacular with the poetry reading getting a couple of songs.*"

THE TRUCK

RAY RICHARDSON

The Truck Theatre, based at the Seymour Entrepreneur Centre, University of Sydney, is putting on an integrated programme on the theme of "Multi Cultural Australia" in secondary schools. Five workshop programmes for student projects are running at De La Salle High and De La Salle Macquarie. Performances of two Australian plays, Nigel Trovati's *Juke* and Alex Black's *Home And Away*, which both deal with racial prejudice, are used to stimulate discussion and follow up work in schools. Director Robert Lavin directed theatre programmes with third year NIDA students entitled *Chaparr*. The play, about a Jewish immigrant family arriving at the time of Federation, will be produced by the company at first in 1979.

The company will visit Adelaide in August for the NAIDE and INGA conferences and residencies in October for a Theatre in Education festival. In September, May Fairclough and the TROILS TIE team from South Australia are being brought to Sydney to work in schools and deliver primary programmes for The Truck Theatre. The company is mounting Theatre Workshops, University of Sydney with its Education Centre for work in Gordon/Coonamble. The company has also worked in youth areas, community visits and for Invercargill comes with the NSW Department of Education.

A second team has been brought together to bring primary drama workshop programmes and performances specially for the Far West region of the state. For both companies, the work teachers employed have been chosen for both their theatrical and educational expertise. 1979 is both a busy and a productive year for the company.

BUNNY FOR KRAKERJAX

ALAN GAUCI, Krakerjox Drama School

Krakerjox (Drama School) is the result of Alan Gauci's daughter Angela's great wish to spend on the telephone, which worked when she was four and continued till last year. With a few friends looking round for somewhere Angela could learn drama, he came up against a great black wall. Eventually he met two young people in the theatre who agreed to come out to Burdigham Hills and teach Angela and anyone who wanted to come along. Things took on so well that he converted their ramshackle room into a studio for the children, and every week the studio began to gain an extra faculty. A few months later they were able to spend nearly \$1,000 in video equipment, cameras, microphones, monitors etc. These were useful too for the ever increasing number of parents to watch their children on from the video room, so as to avoid embarrassing the kids.

Last April Krakerjox was delighted to accept one of Australia's best known TV directors and screeners, as Director of the School Holiday Theatre. The studio then was funded and the students, made up of equal numbers of children, teenagers and adults, or then mostly children. It always changed very little for classes, they are well within the reach of the average family living in the area and haven't risen since 1976. In the third time of its existence drama from Krakerjox has appeared on television in live shows and have been successful in Freightliner-Burdigham Hills Council recently offered the School the use of its North Rocks Community Centre for a change in the school can put on a play for the School annual festival, directed by Bunny Brooker the play will be *Our Town*.

ETHNIC MUSIC ASSISTANCE

JAMES MURDOCH, National Director of the Australian Music Centre.

"Mr James Murdoch has just been appointed to the newly created position of Ethnic Music Promotions Officer. The Australian Music Centre's function is generally to promote and assist in the development of music in Australia, in particular Australian composers and musicians and it has been active in collecting recordings and producing concerts of ethnic music."

There are many fine Australian musicians of migrant backgrounds, largely unknown outside their own communities whose music is part of strong and exciting traditions. Without some assistance for these musicians in marketing the music industry — organisations, festivals, recording companies, the media — opportunities to hear this music and for the continuity and growth of their traditions, will be lost. The appointment is an national basis, and Mr Murdoch will spend time in each state contacting community groups and individual musicians.

James Murdoch has a wide experience with the media and music organisations in Australia who researched and compiled the recent publication *Directory of Australian Music Organisations* as well as practical experience in organising ethnic music concerts. His role will be to act as a bridge between musicians who want to find wider audiences for their music and established organisations."

HILFMANN TAKES OVER TOTE

DALE TURNBULL, Chairman of the Tote. "Sir Robert Hilfmann, Australia's most distinguished theatrical man of our time has been appointed Artistic Director of the Tote Theatre Company Sydney. He will have complete artistic authority at the Tote and also had been appointed as a member of the Company's Board."

While it is true that recently we have talked with a number of other people about the possibility

(Continued on page 44)

LETTERS

Dear Sir

Thank you for the "Drooping Mince" display in your June issue. However, I would like to point out that the display (credited to Carol Peacock for Costume design for ABC's *Don't Tell*) should have been credited to Carol Mochman and Peter Haddadine should have been credited for photographs.

Yours sincerely

Allen Carpenter
Administrator, O.S.P.A.
(Oscar Statuette Association in the
Performing Arts)

Dear Sir,

NIDA like a great when God let the righteous, you even Christian magazines of Peter Kennedy and the cold ruthlessness of George Whaley, has run and with a past head whacked out as apology from *Playboy* Australia for printing an article which severely slipped in (NIDA's) reviewer procedures apparently the accompanying article printing the place was permitted.

I feel that with active heated doesn't generate argument and conflict to necessary in Australian theatre now — this is all rather disturbing. NIDA needs a large part of the credit.

Ben Star's article "But what about the signatures?" related to the experience of one particular girl in her NIDA audition is totally questionable. I wish her objective had been more defined in writing the article, rather than the badly range of wanting to "let back", because she did touch real points. None of which were expressed in either Peter Kennedy's or George Whaley's replies. She was rather blingingly pushed aside as "bad form".

Whaley claimed the "distorted the facts". The "last" is not points 1-9 on a clean sheet of paper, absolutely showing the guidelines for the way in audition is hoped to be run. But's facts are those the experience and I defy anybody to deny the possibility of her experience however much he is concerned it should not happen.

Can I also say here, due to the sound of a three audition procedures George Whaley has on hand are properly the same as those used by the more advanced and famous drama schools in England. I have participated in every audition and know the look! Some were run by people whose motives I thoroughly respect. Even those auditions were as times horrendous and totally questionable, at other times, worked beautifully — reflecting nothing more than the relative nature of us humans, and needs like "standards" and "abuse". It indicates that all one particular acting school can do, is to attract people to the norms and standards it sets up

and. Those who don't get it, don't fit — that's all. Australia's tragedy is that NIDA is the one main school perhaps a real challenge from the Victorian College of the Arts is now in evidence in this country. In the danger is the NIDA's "norms" and "standards" "insect" situation, then the plain lack the rigour and continued healthy attack it would act with their real alternatives to NIDA. So this defensive "breaking out" as a small article of attack.

I am not saying, or, dismissing NIDA, as a school for those it. Whaley has my respect for the practical and concerned changes he is, I believe bringing to the place. And I am understood he does to get away from just this single flat-point. (There was the other article.)

Ben Star's experience seems valid.

She describes largely types who have auditions anywhere. She is angry at the use of NIDA, senior students who take the same up seriously. A valid point, but valid. I have seldom seen this type work. The "I've made it twice" and you haven't got" attitude, as however "best" is a form a message is signifying and almost impossible to avoid from even the most "innocent" of young students.

Ben's point about the male female ratio is equally valid. And NIDA can only answer that it is running out students to fit into the problems of a new market in Australia. More jobs are available for men as they accept more men students. Ah ha! Do we perhaps get a glimpse of where NIDA is now? That's OK, as long as NIDA can admit that there is a world wide body of theatre can theatre training, which is not concerned with training for "establishment theatre", and admit that they will therefore be under attack from the body on just that note.

Then Ben's concern with her treatment by staff is his just experience. We are all influenced by the focus of the location and the con man as whether looks we walk in a large or lesser degree. If at Mr Whaley's doors, all his staff at NIDA are not. I shall make him and return under the new board Mince (in fairness. Ben does not say what for these "types" were those who eventually did get into NIDA.)

Ben's final point about norms and policies "in groups" is interesting. To the best of my knowledge, most of NIDA are what middle class Australians, ranging more groups from IT IT. An interesting and valid point upon which to meditate.

Sometimes I would have found the whole note more plausible if George Whaley had been able to say — "I'm sorry if that was your experience. I'm trying for it not to happen. I know that it can".

With a system that demands that over 700 people be auditioned by a handful of tutors I would say it could happen too easily.

But what really worries me is the spectacle of seemingly all the staff and students at NIDA, throwing up their hands in horror at Ben's dangerous article. I would have hoped that NIDA might have welcomed the final glimpse of a stirring of dissent or argument in, of all things. TA. I would have hoped to see NIDA plunge in and take the opportunity to search those pages with all sorts of discussion — rather than this defensive rush to preserve its image.

And I am very glad TA has had to print an apology after Peter Kennedy's stamping of his literary foot. (Do you need the money?)

Yours sincerely,

Brigitte Kilmerian
N.S.W.

— No — we just can't afford the court case —

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Dear Sir,

The standard of theatre in a country is greatly influenced by the standard of its criticism. The theatre critic needs to bring to his work an expertise, based on his training and experience, which is more specialised than that of his fellow theatre patrons. Good criticism provides the theatre with self-criticism for discriminating.

As our national theatre matures, and the only one. Theatre Australia has a real part to play in measuring and improving the standard of theatre in this country.

That it was with some surprise and disappointment that I read Raymond Stanley's review of the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *The Storm*, Strindberg (TA, June, 1976). I am not concerned here with critiquing the production but rather the review, which I found to be grossly in spite, inconsistent and contradictory in its comments and observations in fact.

To take the first point, experience with so "every audience approving meaningful" and "again and again one blames the revolve stage while spins up the production and helps it to run so smoothly" we mislead and abuse, and suggest, probably quite erroneously, that Mr Stanley is an unimpassioned viewer in the theatre, decided by the magical world of his dream.

His comments are misleading. He attributes the success of the production to the "masterly direction" of the English director, Frank Hauser, on one hand and then to Marie Wilman Zappi for the fight scenes, in which "there is a tendency to asphyxiate for laughs" demonstrates a serious misunderstanding of both the style of the play and the director's role in establishing it. His other words, the director must have wanted to emphasise the broad comedy in the play, as he demonstrated in the production as a whole.

Interestingly, Mr Stanley later accuses Jennifer Hagan (although "creation" is perhaps too strong a word) for his initiative suggestion for looking at "even plays".

There seems to be a relevance among Australian theatre critics to be too critical, as if criticism might do the industry better a great disservice. Even with our famous daily newspaper critics there is a tendency to counter every critical comment with a counter-theory one. To mention Jennifer Hagan again, Mr Stanley often gently rebukes her for "knowing too much" and "under-playing", illustrating by saying that she is the only actress in the country who could play it so well. If only hope she does not see her Mrs Gellies as the "panda skin" for her (Hagan). And what an irony to the many other fine actresses in this country.

Finally, the title of the review is misleading and unfortunate and offers no constructive comments to the serious students of the theatre. In his laudatory review, Mr Stanley goes as far as recommending that the ABC record the production for posterity. What? A competent Australian production of an English Restoration comedy recorded for posterity?

To call this production a "landmark" in Australian theatre is like saying that *Dumbarton* is the great Australian play. Perhaps if Mr Stanley is looking for "landmarks" in Australian theatre he should consider the Australian Performing Group's productions of *Search of the Invisible* and *It's a Mad World My Master* or Kenneth's production of *Comedy of Errors* to name but a few.

Dear Australia, may I appeal to you to maintain your high standard of theatrical journalism by presenting only disinterested and perceptive reviews.

Yours faithfully,
Mr Lesley Macdonnell
Auchtermuchty, Vico.

Dear Sir,

It is not, and never has been, my practice to reply to anonymous letters or advice when it is anonymously based.

David Gyger's review, at your recent issue on the subject of the Australian Opera's programmes for primary school students does not, however, in my opinion fall into this category. I have no quarrel with Mr Gyger's observations on either the works themselves or the production of them. It is his clear propensity to express his opinions and I would defend his right to do so whenever his criticism may be.

I take exception on the other hand to a number of blood accusations of fact which he makes, for which, to the best of my certain knowledge, he can have no grounds. I believe, too, that attributing my work to a ready lie and dishonesty for the crime to state under what circumstances he or she observed it.

Let me state the facts as I understand them:

1 Mr Gyger's review was undertaken as it is my practice not to accept any formal review of programmes designed for children.

2 Mr Gyger attended a preview performance of the Opera-Go Round programme presented for members of the Australian Opera's administrative staff and their children at which the bulk of the audience were adults.

3 Mr Gyger has not, to my knowledge, attended any performance given in classrooms at schools which is the condition for which they were designed and in which the participatory elements in both works can best be seen in operation. If Mr Gyger wishes to see in what sense they may be regarded as educational perhaps he would care to read the feedback forms which are completed by teachers after each performance.

4 Mr Gyger has assumed, for some bizarre reason that Professor Robert's *Comic Knaves* and *Red the Sorcerer Who Wanted to Sleep* are intended as an introduction to formal opera performances. Certainly he cannot have gleaned this information from any printed or verbal information originating from the Australian Opera as it has never been a claim which we have made and indeed, a far cry from the company's policy in respect of this programme. The aim of our policy at the primary school level is simply to provide for children at the classroom an experience of live performance in which the activity of singing is predominant. Questions of an introduction to opera or direct comparisons with adult experience are irrelevant. Mr Gyger may disagree with this policy, but his last line informs himself about it — to be, more than any other journalist in the country, his must be an adequate opportunity of doing.

Mr Gyger then proceeds to draw a comparison with a programme which he has seen in Queensland. I know the programme and I respect both its intentions and its achievement but the fact is, as you are quite differing. It is intended, quite reasonably, as an introduction to formal opera. One is not, to pursue Mr Gyger's line of reasoning would be to argue that it would be better to do a point version of Verdi's *La Traviata* than *The Sound of Music* if what you had an use to do was *The Sound of Music*.

He may be right to argue that one is better than the other, but if criticism is to be reduced to the level of what a guy is doing Shakespeare rather than Kenneth, the future for criticism is grim indeed.

Yours faithfully
Justin Macdonnell
Teaching & Education Projects
Manager

REFRY TO ADVICE LETTER

The whole point of my comments about *Sel* and *Kobalt* which I subsequently did not stress explicitly enough in my article in the June issue,

was that a heavily subsidised opera company ought to devote an educational strategy, to presenting opera rather than trying — as Mr Macdonnell's words — "simply to provide for children at the classroom an experience of live performance in which the activity of singing is predominant".

Issue my criticisms were of the work itself and the fact it was being presented by the AO and I did not comment either on the standard of the performance or the audience reaction, the fact it involved a preview performance is hardly relevant to this discussion.

I do not object to *Sel*, *Kobalt*, *The Sound of Music*, rock groups or community sing-alongs in such merely fact that completely negates a criticism of the AO's programme in view of the official role of the program involved and the fact that it is presented by the Australian Opera, those who missed — and their parents — can be pardoned for thinking it is intended as an introduction to opera and not something else.

David Gyger
Greenwich, NSW

Dear Sir,

Whilst I was delighted with Ray Stanley's warmly enthusiastic response to my production of *Richard III* for the MTC, I am most I wish to correct a false impression given by your reviewer.

I did not direct *The Ravenscroft Legend*. I was responsible however, for initially suggesting the play to John Bennett and for doing some of the early work on the design. Ken Froehdman

Yours sincerely
NEIL HODGSON
MTC, Melbourne

Dear Sir,

We were recently given by an unknown donor, a large picture frame containing forty photographs of Maud Jeffries and John Wright in the costumes of the many productions they appeared in. Presumably the picture is all value in some way, but we cannot find out who these two people were.

The whole picture appears to be about 1920 vintage and the photographs were assembled by a photographer "of Sydney and Melbourne", so presumably the two people were Australian. Their costumes indicate they could have been in opera.

We have looked through a number of theatrical stills manuals, *Who's Who* in the National Library in Canberra, but can find no reference to them. Can you suggest where we might be able to obtain a short biography?

Yours faithfully
M. P. Ryan,
Vice President,
Geelong Repertory Society

Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



One of the highlights for me of the recent theatre season has been Sirish Berkoff's *East*, surprisingly, because I hadn't expected to enjoy it. My only fear is that it will have an influence on others here to copy it, and a job can't be done. Australians have to do their own thing in their own way. Another highlight has been that very clever, likeable and original comedian Chris Langham. Maybe his show could have done with some editing, but one hopes he'll be returning sometime.

Seems to be a very strong possibility Myrna Loy will be touring in a play here early next year.

And the blackboard attraction to be promoted by Michael Ripley next year will possibly include concerts given by John Andrews if negotiations now taking place are successful.

A reader of *Theatre Australia* (Bill Abbot), has commented my recent assertion that we have no film directors who have graduated from the stage. Quite rightly he mentions the case of Jim Sharman, whose films I never have been able to catch up on, but hope eventually to see. The

Night *The Powder*. Thanks Bill, very Jim.

Before separating of a production in Australia, actor musical comedy writer Frank Houston (John's writing is musical about gangster Squary Taylor) has a mixed bag, not wide two of his own songs on "Killing Ourselves" and "Bliss Street". The LP of the *Bliss Street* musical *The Boy Who Dared to Dream* deserves to be more widely known. Understand there's a possibility Robert Helpmann will be turning *Whispering Mayhem* into a ballet. Apparently not so long ago, he had the 1958 Oliver Morley Gibson production run through specially for him, and indicated he was thinking along those lines. Wonder how many people have noticed the amazing combination Quincey Crisp loans to Denis Polson.

Am constantly hearing of one particular dramatic artist who endures mismanagement by submitting plays, for his writers. Naturally they don't want to upset him, but it would be easier all round if real tries would submit such plays in the first place under a pseudonym, but maybe he has not had much luck in his work. Perhaps some guidelines ought to be set down for people involved in dual capacities of playwrights and critics.

Not surprisingly John Thawton's son and grandson for the Victoria State Opera Company's production of *Macbeth* left everyone gasping with admiration. Question is: Why hasn't he been brought back long ago for the Australian Opera, Australian Ballet or one of the state subsidised drama companies? It is going to be allowed to stagnate in Hollywood all over again. And talking of the Victoria State Opera, compares to them for giving away free such expensive and informative programmes, when the prices of those aimed for other

theatrical situations are going up by leaps and bounds.

My old friend Robert Atkinson sends me a copy of Auckland's Mercury Theatre 19th anniversary season programme. He is executive director of the theatre and one of a full of admiration for what the Mercury has achieved in six years. 110 plays which include offerings such as *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Minor Fair* and *Madness IV* as well to mention like *Contemporary Tales* and *Ides of March*. Past productions include *The Animals*, *Man Bennett's Madam*, *Chapin* and Robert Bolt's *State of Revolution*. Maybe one day a Mercury company will tour Australia. I guess quite a few of the New Zealanders who have emigrated here will have noted in the Mercury like Robert Van Marrewijk for instance.

I suppose Morna Carlsson, who died recently will be known best for her portrayal of Olive Turner in *Billboard*, yet for many years she did sterling work as the stage, both for the St Martin's and MTC. Not many people appear to be aware that English-born Morna came from a theatrical family. Her grandfather, Kevin Carlsson, was a Welsh first actor and her father, who also bore the same name, was an actor and playwright. An uncle, Charles Curwen, was an actor manager. Morna had married repertory experience in English rep in the early '30s. This included working with the Broadhead Repertory Players in Bury where she became godmother to actress Muriel Rostand's daughter Morna, called after her. With her Australian husband, Alan Matheson, she ran the Macdonald Repertory from 1934 until departing for Australia in December 1934. Apart from directing plays and being a top notch actress, she was also a very active member of Actors' Equity.

MUSICALS FOR AMATEUR SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS

J. C. Williamson Theatres Limited holds the amateur rights for many popular musicals, including grand shows of the past with music by Lehár, Franz von Suppé, Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert and Lionel Lincoln. Every one of these shows has been a success on the professional stage. Why not have your school or Amateur Musical Society do their own production of one of them? You can choose from many wonderful shows including the following —

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Steven Berkoff

EAST AND AUSTRALIA

Yes. We have enjoyed Australia and I think Australia has been enjoying us at least as much. From when we first landed down in Adelaide in 85' heat and those ourselves into the bleakest, driest sea we have been welcomed and many hands have clasped ours and fallen onto our shoulders — our stomachs have been filled in barbeques and our parched-throats English people stints have been lavished and smothered by the soft waving Summer sun — our mouths kissed our passions embraced and our ears soaked with tanking music of music. Truly we must not complain and it would be childish to do so since we find the City's wars heated and timely — observable and concerned. And the audiences have been good, they respond more from the gut than English audiences and whoops and yelp a lot.

Since the "scandal" blew up in the South Australian parliament about our "filthy play" much attention was drawn to its presence in Adelaide. But the night was ours as well as our movies and we all celebrated with that great City impresario Eric Durr who had the honour to bring us over here — or rather right. He has asked many-great visitors and on the end may have lost a little money on our Sydney success but it seems that in the great Australian bush few others have taken the kind of risks he has. After the first night in Adelaide we had dinner in a mid-morning restaurant with the Premier, Don Dunstan, who was fascinating to talk to particularly referring to abstract art, while Eric Durr did wild impersonations of Frank Thring whom I had not heard of before, but the impersonations reminded me of an old-time actor so I assumed that he acted it. Well the company were reduced to painful looks and concern for Mr. Dunstan but he threw up his hands and seemed to like it and so did we all and admired his brevity, if not his impersonations. Our Business Manager at the time laughed loudest since he was engaged in checkers picking and promoting tax-shares to sell to him.

After this, the show took a fortune to Adelaide which it promptly lost in Sydney at a venue called the New Arts, where each seat that clacked upward sent an echo round the building reminding us of a rotating beam. The reviews were astounding — really humbling and again the Press welcomed us like a breath of fresh air as in a room full of old furts. Sweet adjectives and superlatives were hurled at

us like confetti at a bride and we thought we were laughing — we were, the audience weren't there to laugh. Rancours came first but Fear was not a sea-thing, it is first and foremost a play based together with strong sense of verse, dense prose, music, dynamic acting and dancing. It is a gash — an enormous gash maybe but not spotty enough for the "Let my people speak" brigade. One or two of the Press were a bit hung up about "don't bring your Aunt Edna" which kept some serious punters away who thought it might be odd/camp which people here love so much. Strange how much theatre here is seen as gay. The successful shows seen at the New Arts were the gay ones, *Rocky Horror*, *Flowers*, *Reg Livermore*, *Benjamin Franklin* etc. Gayish impressions abound — while minority

viewing heterosexual plays, or the description of this, was hard art to find an audience.

Usually, although not always, one of the manifestations of decadence in the theatre is where men drag up — where no women is left but for the closest wit of achieving the bodies of women. Some notable examples obviously exist — when energy and power has gone we rattle around the deities for a suspended beat. When in New York, Berlin or Paris there arrived a wild prodding theatre, its demise was usually marked by transvestite shows that in City land the theatre seems not yet to have had a great gay day and has avoided its renascence and apted straight away for decay. It managed to leap over the obstacle of creating a great ensemble but completed



Steven Berkoff.

Photo: Robert McLaughlin

around the world of the west English rep. The system of play by play-casting with its limited play-offs and churning returns Actors who work together for weeks then split up — no development or unity of the physical and psychic energies of the actors. Australia with its great art and health-giving sun could produce a strong physical theatre as great as the Polish ones — but must start from the power and the health of the performer. At MIDA when I did some workshops I witnessed enormous potential and focus of energy but who will continue to train it for anything worth while after they leave. There is some talent here no doubt in the directing of plays, but there needs to be an Australian or European voice and not the Working Rep one. I couldn't see much more we were playing every night but what I did not showed me that there is some potential there but lamentable lack of vision or creativity.

The most astounding experience was seeing *Chorus Line* and being amazed at people here who could sing and dance and act! A perfect example that has been together for a year and nearly all Australian. Watching the New South Wales Dance Company rehearse was also a great experience and I can see how dance enriched by its own energy of the dancers and not some ideology from England — was able to change itself and speak, influenced more by the dance revolution in America. They are a powerful and general company. Our actors need to go in and

watch the dancers and ogle the girls, beautiful both men and women. *Chorus Line* is a gem. Peggy is one of the great examples of total theatre. We were also fortunate to do some classes with Don Asher. I missed the MTC Richard III with Bruce Melis which sounded very interesting but saw Robert News as the best. After Asher I have never seen — not that I have ever seen *Hamlets*.

By this time East peaked itself up on the last week in Sydney and toured Canberra and Melbourne where it did great business. The first night in Melbourne at the beautiful Princess Theatre was glorious since 100 people walked out but there were mostly pagers in till the quarters 1500 seat theatre. Among those walking out was Frank Thring which disappointed me when I was told this, since I wondered whether he really was as prodigious as Eric's impressionist. The next day headlines in one of the gutter press papers was "Sullivan Walks Out". The two leads of *The Sullivan* soap opera had walked out muttering to some press people how offensive it was while at the end of the evening we had the biggest ovation in our history time and time again the next day. After that we never failed to elicit huge roars of laughter from the audience when we mentioned the *Sullivan* on our improvised scenes. It was so if they the audience, were trying with us to kill all off the small minded hypocrites (with their laughter).

East is a thrilling play and an attractive

play and sometimes the audience is too stupid or tight-necked to accept it but when they did and that was most nights they got all on us and laughed all they could down the aisle.

I am always willing to do more and say more and go further and further both in writing and performing because I feel that the further you go the nearer you are. That's not meant to be a smart comment but a statement of intent. To confirm your dreams, hopes and fantasies seem to be the great of theatre — a holy al before where you can be profane or innocent where the currency that you deal in is no matter what the subject, should always be money — since audiences everywhere are starved for it and while the Australians get fatter they sink are sulkier and shrunken. The stage must send out energy to unlock energy — the flowing backwards and forwards got rid of stagnant pools. There is too much stink in theatre both here and in England and people don't like going into a stinking room — start moving and then you are left with the stink bomb, Frank Thring and *The Sullivan*.

We have liked being here. It is more casual and less affected than the grimy hole called London. There the theatre is being ground away at the roots, it is not just collapsing.

I shall now direct my version of *Kafka's Metamorphosis* at the Muncie Theatre in Sydney. I am glad to be allowed work at the celebrated Muncie and hope that we will make it a great experience for everyone.

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Roger Pulvers

Finding "th

What makes Japanese theatricality so forceful and uncompromising? What is it that links the work of the major playwrights and directors — people presenting plays in enormously varying styles — that can be called "the Japanese element"? (I mean this Japanese element within the context of the country, not looking from the outside which makes everything look "Japanese".)

Isuzu Tadashi dramaplaywright exploring the basis of Japanese physicality (in *Goodenighted Birds* explore the European)

Kana Juro playwright director and producer theatre that has made it through the screen without watering down a message

Shuzo Kikuchi playwright who has furnished his own (and stage language)

Isuzu Tadashi playwright who is still the most prolific and popular dramatist in Japan

I will mention the Tokyo Ltd. Theatre, Tada Kikuchi and a variety of independent producers. But the heart of Japanese theatre lies largely within these four personalities.

Suzuki Tadashi announced in early '76 that he was moving his Wanda La Te Theatre to the oldback film theatre, originally called the Pro Stage, had first produced Shuzo Kikuchi's *Shogun*. After that, in the early seventies, Suzuki moved



Shuzo Kikuchi in *Shogun* of the Pro Stage opposite the whole play looking concerned

Japanese element[™]

and presented Shuzo Koyoko in her show *About the Dramatic*. He took that show and later as *Legend in France*.

Now it is seven years later and Koyoko has moved out of opera, in fact, way out of town, eight hours on express-pain, into those hours by bus into the mountains. Last August he presented a rediscovered masterpiece of classic gender roles conversation, his *Night of the Forest Lake About the Dramatic* is a collage. The main theme of the production is provided by Waite's *Believe* as interpreted by Suzuki. In addition, there is a portrait of Freud by Richard Hudson as his.

But playing his never been Suzuki's concern. The act is only a jumping off point for the high point in the presentation. The theme is emotion and movement, female last and female power. Throughout the performance, there is a lot in the form of map, pop music and outrageous gesturing provide both relief and contrast to the extreme seriousness of the theme. Lines can be delivered in a manner totally unexpected, in broadly melodic terms, in the extreme meaning of the words. The effect is one of high end up. Occasionally, however, the emphasis on the principle, as when Koyoko (Koyoko) Suzuki's latest "faded", performs her night routine, brushing her teeth, drinking water, and sneezing together to the screen of the Japanese TV, My Nighttime Place.

Suzuko Koyoko is, in a word, an actress of genius. There is always the threat that she will break out and become her power. And at last we see her the most, uniquely variety of her. Actually, she is who Suzuki's theme is about the act of words, the delivery of words, as a physical action. The voice is an instrument of physical attack, and so the distinction between things and things done is obliterated. Her strength lies in long to go a coming to terms with this, in the way that Suzuki has.

The atmosphere, in the landscape, with 600 people from Tokyo packed in the shared premises, is to say the least, dense. Suzuki also does his yearly Greek play in the big city, using the same actors in a core. But he doesn't believe there will be any more *Night of the Forest*.

Kara Jaro and his Red Tent now do two shows a year, the May show which was for a popular following, and the October show which depends on the theatrical art. The Red Tent is still going strong, for over ten years now. Kara is called theatre's calm figure, maintaining his stage poetry and his integrity from the Shogun's days of the last years.

His October show *At School for Actors* is an assault on any phony idea of the dream in the conventional it left out. Everything from letters to pup is parodied. Action movements open

jaw delivery by gesturing, and rarely self consciousness appear your familiar script between. There is a constant entrance on stage, a physicality that never lets up.

The story of the play revolves around the unlikely death of Sakai who is supposed to be a politician at a Wild Cherry Police Academy. The main character is a policeman, played by Li Rusan (who is one of Suzuki's best actors), and is married to Kari. Relationships of authority of rank and exploitation, are all part of this attack on the language and violence of power. The teacher in the "school" is none other than William Shakespeare who writes a path poem and speaks the word in female Koyoko's voice.

I saw first or so plays by Koyoko's Miesha (the name here is a play on words with his own logic — by the end of the night you must say like his).

In *A Piece of a Memory* a man walks on and sits on a bench. There is a bus stop sign. The object that appears in Koyoko's play — poems, gestures, dolls, etc. are usually all the same. The addresser the man says that he must be waiting for the bus. He says that he is a good boy who has been. He explains that that is the bench on which people who are waiting for the bus sit. Therefore, he must be "a man waiting for the bus". In Koyoko's world the objects define the people.

In his biggest production of last year, *Thirty Days With September*, once again we see the objects the poem is about, the poem, the poetry, the word-play itself. In this play, a young man who has not gone to his university last five months meets an older couple who show him into their life. The man's wife goes there. The play is a collage of words with super strength in communication until at the end there is a circle of violent chaos.

Koyoko's is a musical theatre. Like Madonna, he is convincing himself by nature and compelling the viewer to accept his statements, not impose them on the world of the presentation. There is great poetry in his work, the poetry of the images he is the master in figures of the dream of fantasy. One may get tired at times of the same symbols and same speech patterns (mainly his year in his work, just as one may get tired of having the same dreams get and over. It adds to the vision).

Last year's major play of last year was the broad portrait of a man's Tokyo life, *The Man Who Once Thought He Was Not Dead*. *How To Be Young To Be an Actor*. This was produced by Koyoko and the brilliant comic actor, Otsuka Shunji, last November. The style of the piece is basically music hall. It is full of



The Tokyo Red Tent is rehearsal

musical, dance, ballroom, and historical character references. Virtually every character who made that part of Tokyo, called *Asakusa* (Asakusa), makes an appearance. So does the Emperor, who, at the end, kneels in front of the audience, while a bigger and bigger Kato, a writer, sharp down a bowl of porridge. It is not in front of him.

I saw his last play in this year, one of those a piece about him that he calls a "happo musical". I gave you an idea of his theme, I'd say he's like a combination of Brecht and Billy Joel. Theatrical Wilder.

Of course, he is hardly all. There is the Tokyo Red Tent, who put on two superb shows last year in their new city theatre in Shogun. There is Toshi Koyoko, who has been for a while, but only two months ago graduated his own version of *Asakusa* in Shogun (Tokyo was Suzuki's "discovery" and would have no less. Sakai after the manner had his. I. There were the over thirty-old performers I saw of words in Shogun. A *Drive Home*. Open on the commercial stage, close your eyes and it could have been My Fair Lady. It is good making one point like the player.

I saw his last play *My Japanese* at Toshi Koyoko, which was a masterpiece of brilliant, lively, bright, and very, and took off with some beautiful music. It was done in good. Like a play, with a focus on a new nation than a small group, with a strong core and a lot of dancing. I think it was a success in Japan, a country where traditionally, the performer has been his always gone beyond the public's embrace.

A very small festival was held in good at Chabara. Koyoko's *My Japanese* was a masterpiece of brilliant, lively, bright, and very, and took off with some beautiful music. It was done in good. Like a play, with a focus on a new nation than a small group, with a strong core and a lot of dancing. I think it was a success in Japan, a country where traditionally, the performer has been his always gone beyond the public's embrace.

Finally, there is a third, just as much as the incredible last performance, the most of this together? This is a difficult question to answer. Consider, have always looked at Japan and (Continued on page 44)

SHAKESPEARE PRODUCTION IN AUSTRALIA



New strides are being taken with Shakespeare production in this country: some reducing the plays to bare bones and minimalist sets — the Strain group (Melbourne) — some innovative in bold use of setting — Bell's canvas for *Comedy of Errors*, Rodger's wheel of fortune for *Richard III* — some with mighty reach attempting to encompass two thirds of the Henriad in one adaptation, and now the boldness of having Shakespeare's greatest play "translated" into the Australian idiom by our most successful playwright, David Williamson.

Shakespeare is a writer for all seasons, his plays speak to all nations and across centuries, though individually they can be accused like many, are not comprised for Australians for seasons. The works stand the great test, however, sometimes considered for new purposes, a business added here, a twist discarded there, sometimes poorly defined when translated but still standing magnificently on the dramatic landscape. If the role of Hamlet is, as Max Beerley has commented, "the leap through which every conscious mind jumps", the plays are the cards which every director must occupy before his creative leap.

The following statements are from directors of recent productions who were asked to set out the ideas and method behind their work. If a thought here can be described as a first, most seem to work from the outside in, working for a setting and costume model as support upon the play. The need to act as a very close support with the play is the first to go. Perhaps native habits of thought and McEwan's view that visual perception is now predominant have brought this about. Perhaps, though, what has emerged is not a general consensus for a diversity of approach. This is as it should be if race are not going to be cut too deeply into the path that leads to the future.

Finding the Image

John Bell talks to
Nick Enright

John Bell is hooked on Shakespeare. That is no surprise to anyone who knows the record: performances of at least half-a-dozen leading parts and a brace of supporting parts in England and Australia over the last fifteen years, and more recently as a producer of Shakespeare in as many years at Nimrod.

There seems to be a strong — and generally usual — motivating image to every *Shakespeare*. When you approach the text for the first time, does the image jump out at you, or do you move it for a motivating image?

I think the first way something occurs to me when I think about the plays, which I do quite frequently. I think about the whole canon, which plays should be done now, or next year or in this theatre, or in other theatres, and something might occur to me.

For instance, with *Comedy of Errors* I found an old book on merry-go-rounds, bagpiping images. I thought "I'd love to use this. Wouldn't *Comedy of Errors* be wonderful in that kind of setting, busy background world?"

Maybe *Aids* was an enormous popular success but even you did it here. What are you off towards that?

It was very much coming to live in Barry Hills, and waking around among the bushhops, shopping. I really got a big buzz out of that, you know, the vibrancy and showing off and whacking and doing that was going on. I really hadn't experienced that in England, and coming back here I found it very exciting.

That and then going down to the Glenelg bar in Crown Street. There was a very primitive folk music on the wall, of Glenelg's mashing into some little town. I thought how beautiful it was and what a wonderful, honest Italian-Australian expression of identity and small town pride.

Then the two designers stepped in and did their own thing with it, made it much more circusy. I had imagined something more maybe perhaps a literal Glenelg atmosphere, but I was pleased that we took it a bit further into the circus, because it meant that we weren't using naturalistic Italian-Australian, we could say "We're just pretending we're just playing."

And was it *Mykiss* or *Barry Hills*?

It was very much Barry Hills, very much. People said they were Italian accents. They weren't, they were Italian-Australian accents. And the actors, I hoped, was very Australian, it wasn't Italian at all.

And the *Twelfth Night*? How did you see about that?

Twelfth Night was perhaps less into factory in retrospect. It was less particular. I very much wanted to do the play. I was

very caught up in the language of it, and the ideas, the configurations of the play. But I wouldn't for a long time think of an image till I started to associate it with Death in Venice. And I think what started me thinking of that was the discovery that Libya was a Venetian colony, supposedly, in Shakespeare's time. And the idea of water, and a crumbling city, youth and age, sexual ambiguity, those things suddenly started. So I talked about it with Kim Carpenter. I wish now we hadn't been quite so limited about it.

Do you mean limited in the sense of having Viola as a boy?

Maybe that, although if I was doing it again, I'd try it again, I think, I thought there was a lot going for that idea. It confused a lot of people, especially the people that hadn't seen the play before, but I think people who did know the play got an extra beam out of it, because they got an extra level.

I think it's a great playing the part as has a performance quality, you know, "Come on, Paul," that Dick Whittington sort of thing. I've always felt that when there's a girl playing it it really occupies the sexual couch.

Why did you choose to have only Viola, rather than all three women played by a boy?

Because, what he was doing with Viola was messing around with the convention. He said "bugger this convention. I'll play girls with it, do another double flip with it, have a boy playing a girl playing a boy." Now if you make the other women boys too, then you lose that.

It's a seriously odd sort of the play. It's a dark play anyway, I suppose, but it means that the resolutions in the fifth act are going to have a sting in the tail. There are going to be a marriage in the play that you mention in the Comedy of Errors programme notes, marriage as the comic conclusion.

Right. But I think all the resolutions in Twelfth Night are very dark, you see—Malvolio's reduction, Agamemnon and Helen being split, Festus being virtually killed out of the household, and two unsatisfactory presumptive marriages, each person getting the wrong twin.

Do you relate that to the way you saw Measure for Measure as the 1972 production?

I do, yes. I think Twelfth Night is a much darker play than people like to admit, and I think Measure for Measure is either a very bad play or else a very dark and ugly play. And I don't think it's bad. I disagree totally with the Catholic, romantic view of the Duke as a sort of Christ-figure. To me, everything points to the fact that he's an absolute bastard of the first class. In fact Garry McKinnall played it.

Yes, sending it up slightly, very serious, but I mean it was a very serious parody. The man was a strong rabid and an anti-silliant, and totally pious and hypocritical at the same time. His thought he was doing the right thing by his lights, so it wasn't just a comic thing, he was a Belphegorian sort of figure in a way.

I was pleased with Measure for Measure. It wasn't well received on the

whole, but I was pleased with what we did. I don't think it totally worked, but if I had the chance to do that production again, I'd go even more baroque with it — not just costume and detail, but investigating the text and the characterizations more.

There's one thing I get cross about with critics and journalists generally, they don't look further than the costumes. They think, "Ah! They've put people into modern dress, what a job, what a send-up". They don't take it seriously as a comment or interpretation, as signalling of the play with modern connotations.

So the Edwardian look of the Twelfth Night is very much concerned with the idea of an affluent domestic world?

Absolutely. I think the image is good. I wish we'd got a bit further away from Victorian, hadn't been quite so literal about it. I wish we'd used it not as a quote but as a starting point. But that's the trouble. I suppose, with doing Shakespeare as this country, you get one crack at it, that it's on for five weeks, then it's scrapped. We don't have that republican system where if a production has something going for it you can put it away for a year, bring it back, change a few things, and costume it.

Though you've proved with Much Ado that you can have a second crack at a production.

Yes, I think we should do it more often. I think all companies, financed and others, should start to build a repertoire of plays.

I think Shakespeare in the most pure theatre we've got. You still get ideas, and here, and a story and a philosophy, and a commentary on the appearance. You don't need to dress it up. You can have outrageous things built for you, very quickly, on an empty stage virtually, and of course you get a feeling of history, it's not just Elizabethan, he's talking about Greece, ancient Rome. And The Tempest seems to go beyond. It's an extraordinarily free-ranging mind, and he makes associations with all one's current and studies. And as well as that he's totally contemptuous. It's not being doubtful about the places and times and figures he's writing about, he's looking for the universal and

John Bell



the ancient and modern that one always has oneself, and that one sets in society and politics around one.

I would like to move into the romantic, and eventually into the tragedies.

Is that a deliberate widening of your work?

Yes, it is. I don't know why, I just feel it. Thinking an appeal to the audience perhaps. Comedy of Errors or Much Ado is so much more accessible.

Of course. And I think I do have a flair for the theatrical even still. I find that great fun to do and I've found a way of doing it that the actors enjoy too. It like to play the historical and tragedies as an actor, but I don't feel yet ready to tackle them as a director.

Would you be prepared to take a play you loved and work with a company, you trust — I suppose it would take a longer rehearsal period — and work towards a common understanding of the play rather than drag with a conception as strong and specific as in your past work?

You'd would if I had enough time. But you'd need six months to do that well.

This image thing I'm unsure how solid it is. I have had a strong image for each production and I think it's worked, but I don't know how much longer one should go on doing that.

There is a kind of groundswell which came up with the recent Old Time Tapestries, where the critical success, I think was "Well it's good to see Shakespeare not monkeyed around with. Do you think you can approach the play in a neutral fashion?"

Certainly not, that's an absolute waste of time. But you can perhaps play down the designer's and director's distorting of the play. I think what I want to avoid from here on is the design and directorial concept being too strong.

I'd be interested in trying to move away from an image that's so strong that people come out whistling the tune, because basically Shakespeare is as much for the actor as for anybody else, if not more so. And that is one reason why he keeps on being done I suppose, because every actor wants to do it. It's said your Master Paces, it's what you've got to do to prove yourself as an actor, to play a good Shakespeare part well. And it's such a thrill for actors to have those people to play and these words to say. And I do feel that one does at times jump them by too strong a visual concept, so that's my resolution for the New Year, to loosen it up a little bit.

"That was actually part of a much longer interview which has unfortunately had to be abruptly cut to fit in with the survey.



Margie Dean, John McTernan and Malcolm Keith in Menzies's *Comedy of Errors*. Photo: Robert McFarlane.



Colin George



Seeking a visual frame

Every age has thought fit to re-interpret Shakespeare according to its own prejudices. His theatrical successors oriented his instinctive genius to suit the theatrical properties of the time. Dryden's *Albion* for *Love and Chastity* with the bells off. The eighteenth century saw his plays as scathing attacks for the prodigious talents of actors such as Garrick and Kean. The Victorians smothered the plays in paint, makeup and operatic perspective. At the turn of this century William Poel cut through all this to point the way most modern directors have followed — unacknowledged staging which allows the playwright's message Elizabethan stagecraft to have its head.

Armed with all this foreknowledge the Director at today who plans a Shakespearean production risks a number of almost insoluble problems in rehearsal. He must first find a visual frame for the production. It was once fashionable to seek refuge in the style of a painter such as Vermeer, or to sit the scene in Medieval Mexico. This inevitably got the devoted chattering excitedly about "reflexions". The spare, bare neutral setting which

followed sub-stepped the problem another way — "What the eye doesn't see, the first cut's contradictory." However, Shakespeare wrote of rooms with arched and girt with chimney to put into in this area. Shakespeare is nothing if not domestic.

Then there is the verse which (for the most part) the plays are written. We suspect the author like his most famous Danish hero preferred a spoken "topicality as the tongue". But must we assume an English public school education presided at his mouth? or an American reading? or indeed (he was a recently coined phrase), "mid-Asiatic"? If "mid-Asiatic" then what is to be the sound of the playwright, or the gesture, or the solemnity of the sound not to mention its another content the demands of Elizabethan London?

We have not yet touched on the Director's "interpretation" which can founder all too easily by superimposing modern thinking on plays that through with Elizabethan attitudes such as the divine right of Kings or the concept of destiny as in *Measure for Measure*, which nowadays raises an incredulous eyebrow.

In recent months the SATC has presented two Shakespearean productions. *Macbeth* was acted in a dark parlour setting by Hugh Cossins, which to my mind, saved the action and locale of the play superbly, and one critic dismissed it as a backstage. The costumes were a mix of Jacobean and Samarra which provided a strikingly neutral silhouette and I think most concerned the backstage man.

Henry IV and most recent production, had a parallel wood surround and a bed into which everyone from the King, Hal, Doll Tearsheet, Hotspur, Kate and a number of others and low life characters including the immortal Falstaff himself, dropped themselves singly or in small numbers. This was considered good, clean fun, as were the costumes which were another mix — the time of Victorian and Elizabethan. A local drama festival, however who had spent a whole term expanding the theory that attire should be correctly in period was in despair. He had started to inform his students that the concept was not of course, one followed by Shakespeare's own company when they performed the play originally.

I have seen Shakespearean productions in gardens and palaces in Compost Ards Cores and Capitalist Open Houses. It is a tribute to the genius of the man that wherever the director and actors make contact with the audience by drawing their energy from the imaginative quality of the writing, rather than attempting to cover up for its antiquity, these occasions have been among my most memorable in the theatre.



Mick Rodger

Informing the text

There is a lefty current in some circles of Melbourne that say Shakespeare must be presented in a 'struggle' and orthodox manner, that a Melbourne audience is more conservative than its Sydney counterpart and less willing to accept innovation where the classes are concerned. *Richard III* seemed to depict that lefty, at least if we are to believe the critics and the direct response of the public.

Richard III had one or two loud detractors amongst the critics but the majority hailed, in particular, the innovative nature of the production. "A new and coldly contemporary reading". "The jumble comes off with business brilliance". "revealed new facets of the Company's work". "constantly presents that element of surprise". etc. To quote more would be tedious. Similarly, I have never received so many enthusiastic letters and phone-calls from theatre goers on any other production. It would seem that the production was not just dismissed from the mind five minutes after the final blackout is communicated.

But innovation can be dangerous. The pervasive aspect of Shakespearean production, to the director, is the temptation to do something different. How to make fresh and original the old familiar classic? That approach in, I believe, a mistake and a trap. Innovation for its own sake only ever appears as that.

Shakespearean production in Australia often seems to be either overly cerebral or speciously experimental. The latter seldom takes the pains and the direct evidence because it is in no way challenging preconceived notions of the text thus becoming an example of what Brook called "daddy theatre" while the latter obscures and clouds the true spirit of the text. The spirit of the text is popularly accessible and not to be confused with an interpretation of the text. Both of the above approaches deflect attention away from the basic ability of the actor to communicate and also hide the absence of a genuine, identifiable care to the production what is often called the "through line". To dress up a production in pretty costumes on the one hand, or a plethora of spectacular effects on the other without there being an organic centre to the production is to indulge in a hollow exercise. That brings us to the reason behind much of the Shakespearean production. If the director is merely asked to direct a given Shakespeare for a theatre, then he might well find himself in the



Michael Murray (Prince Hal) and Ronald Falk (Henry IV) in SATC's *Henry IV* 1 & 2. Photo: David Wilson

direction of acting about for a different approach — difference for its own sake.

Speaking personally, I would never direct a Shakespeare unless I had a specific response and commitment to that play I had wanted to direct. *Richard III* for some time because I had developed a certain attitude towards it: a point of view which seemed to me inherent in the text. Just in reading the play, without any thought of immediate production, I had come to see Richard as the crippled clown, the demonic court jester, the little Hitler-like whom nobody took seriously until it was too late. Coupled with that idea, my own post-graduate drama work at Rialto had given me a very strong impression of the efficacy of the Wheel of Fortune as a Renaissance image for the play's of Prospero (and the source of tragedy). The work I had done with my own company in the East Midlands of England had also given me a good working knowledge of



Ted
Craig

Fidelity to the lines

The production of *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare was to open under the bright new policy of the Old Tote for 1978. Three theatres with three separate policies and each controlled by its own director. It was, a year ago, a heady time. I had been approached to direct the classic at the Drama Theatre. Checking the records, I found that Shakespeare hadn't been produced at the Old Tote for three years (Bill Gaskill's production of *Love's Labour's Lost*). That confirmed my decision to start with a Shakespeare — and also it seemed right that we should launch our new policy with the world's greatest playwright, and more particularly with his last play written at the quarter-century of his genius.

The Tote "bombed" twice in December as *The Tempest* was in the final stages of rehearsal and about to move onto the stage. By the time the play had opened, the "new policy" was in tatters. The Seymour Centre plays had vanished along with Jim Sharman and Rex Cresswell and the Company was existing on a day to day, hand to mouth basis.

The Tempest proved to be a bright spot in the gloom. It set attendance and box office records at the Drama Theatre and played to standing room only for the whole season. I approached the play quite directly. As it was leading off the "classical" season it should not be tricked up (idea of Prospero running an Italian grocer's shop or an amusement park at Kings Cross were laid aside), but delivered "straight". This would be suggested first and foremost by the costumes which would be Elizabethan and Jacobean. Prospero, changing on to the Elizabethan ruff and dressing his daughter and his island servants similarly and the shipwrecked party, essentially more Jacobean and up-to-date twelve years after Prospero's exile, in those Jacobean collar OWs nevertheless decided to dress all the men in trousers and boots to bring a recognisably modern element into it rather than the somewhat quaint breeches and hose of the period.

I wanted to emphasise the stage of the play and agreed with the art designer, Brian Nickless, that we should not really have a formal set but an environment that would allow the greatest amount of effects and surprises. It would also be a bare platform that would present the actors with a strong focus and be a neutral background for the richness of the costumes. Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* as the first play to go into the new

Blackfriars Theatre which was equipped with all sorts of new fangled gadgetry and machinery — traps, flying machinery etc. etc. — and he quite obviously wrote it with the stage effects in mind.

The humanity of the characters in the play was to be the dominant theme and naturally the one that most affected the actors. I took that a step further by humanising Ariel and Caliban as much as possible. Ariel as Prospero's closest companion for twelve years and a friend, Caliban as a kind of wallboy — twenty-four years old and Miranda's "step" brother. Prospero above all was going to be a human being in a truly human dilemma — should he continue to remain isolated or go back to face his past? — and if he does so what will he do about his daughter, his servants and his enemies? Twelve years after this play had gone very wrong in Milan, things were going wrong for Prospero on his island. Miranda was coming of age. Ariel wanted the freedom which Prospero had promised him and Caliban having been educated by Prospero was using his knowledge to rebel against him. I slightly encouraged the theory seems to create an affecting and cliff hanging ending to the last part of the play and had the play typed out like a contemporary playscript.

From the first reading of the play this script had the advantage of emphasising the approach that we would be making to the play — clear, no nonsense and faithful to the meaning and intention of the lines



Brian Myles (*Richard III*) and Jennifer West (*Elizabeth I*) at MTC's *Richard III*
Photo David Perkins

medium English text book, around which my actors and I had improvised a number of group-related productions. Original research material on the "lost" of the Muses' play, the eternal conflict of St. George and the Dragon — our farcical — our Basil, the Lord of Mirth, the Muggles and the Morris Dancers had stuck in my head. All these disparate strands seemed slowly to come together in response to the text of *Richard III*. Suddenly, I had a concrete reason for wanting to direct the play and I was fortunate enough, eventually to find a company willing to stage it.

The Melbourne Theatre Company is, at present, the only company in Australia with a confirmed, year-round presentation of the classics. In addition, the MTC has a superb technical and production back-up. It can encompass even the most bizarre experimental exercise. *Richard III* was not that, but at least it was possible to present a strong, innovative production within the balanced season that had been planned. In the event, the critics and the public responded well to the innovation. The production was an artistic success for the Company.

I have been asked to suggest a general rule for Shakespearean production. Obviously, there isn't one. All I would say is that everyone involved in the production must agree on a common attitude which will inform the text. That is how an organic unity is achieved in the production. It isn't a statement, it communicates through the skill of the performer, not through that of the so-called "translator".



Michael Craig (*Prospero*) and Celia De Bugh (*Miranda*) in the Old Tote Theatre Company's production of *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare
Photo Robert McParlane



Peter Oyston

Updating the play

King Lear is an extraordinary play because it exposes human stupidity, savagery, and values through a drama of suffering.

Because the foolish old King, the "mum" Edgar, and the buffoon Gloucester, rather deeply and thoroughly gain an awareness and insight into the chaos of what it is to be human — they achieve an inner dignity which is close to heroic.

Recently in the media *Neitherrings* criticised the West because we have become soft through self indulgent materialism — we are "enervated" — our values corrupt. Much as we Australians abhor this kind of criticism, there may be some truth in it.

Yet modern or mental ill health is a feature of our age. Psychiatric suffering is common in the suburbs of our cities where food, booze, sex, porn, TV, and other gadget items, provide high standards of living. However, our madmen are not like the madmen in *Lear*. Ours is pampered, restricted, secure, dehumanising, self centred and does not necessarily bring about insight, dignity or necessary imagination, like the madmen described by RD Laing. The special madmen of the dramatic text in Russian literature is world's away from suburban items.

In *Lear*, people suffer, endure and seek a deeper insight into the nature of man. Edgar knows the "reality" of hunger and can the show on top of the horse troughs. Like an enlightened Buddha, he becomes Lear's guru philosopher. Gloucester has his eyes torn out and gains insight, asserting that all sinful wealth should be given to the poor: "Every man should have enough".

To me *Change* is the most significant element and mystery in the play. Every character undergoes a real change. I have done my best to reveal this phenomenal theme. This is the accelerating constant of our "time". *Change* (as much as we try to withstand its inevitable flight) is contained within our good far more. We are

caught in our age between conservatism and economic expansion. The two are diametrically opposed. Thus we have change deeply inside our Australian way of life.

And the play *King Lear*, written in the English Renaissance of 1608, now translated by David Williamson, is as relevant and as disturbing as the Fox Report to the bedlam beggars of our society, the Aborigines. It is relevant to us because the message goes further, unless we change through compassion for suffering our values — our morality, will drag us to the grave. We may expect history to be written to wealth. Tell folks how great they are and how you care — and you mayered up with a cue, or a house, or their land.

The play is the ultimate answer to the true phrase in our language "No".

To me it is a question of awareness. Are we aware of ourselves? If not, *Lear*'s advice is, get yourself glass eyes then you can quite happily say you saw things you didn't.



Reg. Evans as Lear. Peter Oyston's production of David Williamson's "King Lear" after Shakespeare.

Evoking relevant themes

A decision to mount a production of any classic play is determined by the content — the relevancy that it has something relevant to say, specific and timely. Shakespeare is rich of course in possibilities, not only in the number of plays to choose from, but also in the number of interpretations any one play gives rise to. *Henry IV*, Part I has not been seen in Sydney since the late '40's and we couldn't find out when, if ever, Part II had been produced. In looking at them again I had first encountered Part I as the set text for the Leaving Certificate in 1958, I found them rich in themes that spoke to us, here and now: Rebellion, Justice, Honour, Courage, Responsibility, Self-Description, Waste — the last seems endless. But such themes are relevant to all times. What made the plays seem so particularly near to us had to do with the uncertainty of the time they depict, where everything is in question, most of all the concept of honorable action, a last rite for the grabbing of gain to the light of the "liberalised" and easy 1960's the '70's seem very like that to me.

But to discover relevant themes is one thing, to evoke them in a production is quite another. Most of all it was going to be difficult to draw a parallel between the "Caged Bird" of Henry, the deposition and murder of Richard III, which is the source of all his troubles, and the ideological Whirlwind which precipitated Australia as near as ever it has been into a state of revolution, when short lived. I felt the parallel was at least implicit.

Perhaps the most crucial question to be solved in doing any Shakespeare is that of period. It is easily forgotten that in his own time Shakespeare produced his plays in modern dress, that in Elizabethan costume, irrespective of the stage being Italian, Roman, or England more than a hundred years earlier, as with *Henry IV*. So at the outset a decision must be made between a setting which is the time and place of the play, or some other time — hence the frequent practice of modern dress productions. The Histories are more difficult. They are filled with English place names which particularise the locale, unlike *Henry* or the Forest of Arden. Besides they involve battle scenes with constant textual references to swords, daggers and armour and the like. The fights are often the climactic scenes of the plays and have huge potential for theatrical excitement — contemporising them runs the risk of robbing us this potential, while posing great difficulties in actual aftermath. Thus it was with *Richard III* which happened to open on November 13 1975, and received much critical comment regretting the lack of a modern dress production. Some other sort of solution is preferable to me. With *Richard III* I settled for abstraction, the play being so much less "real" than other Histories. But the Henry's are eminently real, by which I mean naturalistic. For all their epic swing,

the portrayal of a nation in turmoil, the range of worlds and classes and ideologies depicted, it is always the human touch that dominates, more of all the relationship between Hal and his two "lovers" Falstaff and Henry. So basic reality was essential.

One specific factor overrules all discussions for Shakespeare productions at Nimrod, and that is of course money. In the first place it would be impossible to realise the full paucity of naturalistic historical truth, a good reason for steering away from the play's legitimate period. So another solution has to be found. The Henrys have a very strong Medieval feeling. There is the roughness of tavern life, the horror of the battlefield, and much talk of death and disease, all of which is so evocative of the Middle Ages. It brought thought to mind, who was passing almost contemporaneously with Shakespeare and similarly depicting an earlier period in a mixture of evocation and symbolic allegory. Looking at his portraits confirmed the conviction. Our aim was to extract from the Henrich's as much as possible that felt modern as well as belonging to it's time.

Economics also determine cost size. We have never exceeded thirteen at Nimrod (probably a little smaller than the Globe company), and in doubling it essential. This is particularly difficult with the vast casts that hit the Histories. Characters have to be cut and merged, but most of all some concepts need to be found. In *Henry*, this emerged from the basic counterpoint in the play between the Court and Town worlds — mostly, each actor played a

character from each world.

Of course the other major factor which determines the feel of the production is the approach to the text. How to observe the discipline of the verse and neither the main of the language without "improving" the words and forging the metaphors and naturalisms more fully realised in contemporary colloquial texts. As well, there is the problem of accent. In John Bell's and my production of *Henry* five years ago, which had an essentially abstract setting in time and place, it seemed not to matter that a degree of Australian accent flavoured the delivery. And of course this is possible while still observing the basic verse and imagery disciplines. John Bell took this step even further with *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Comedy of Errors*. But again, because of the overwhelming presence of place names, as well as character's names, which locate the Histories exclusively in England, they need to be spoken accordingly.

But how did the English speak in 1600 or 1400? The question is irrelevant of course, but that of regional variations is not. In the *Henry's*, Glendower is Welsh, Douglas is Scots, Hotspur from 'the North', Justice Shallow and Silence are from Gloucestershire and so on, and Mistress Quickly, Poins, Bardolph and Co. are written as a rough dialect very suited to a cockney being. England is symbolically torn apart in one issue of *Henry* and is the prize everyone is fighting for. It is essential to capture this feeling of the country as a whole, and hence the respective accents are necessary. Again is

Richard Wherrett



the more abstract *Richard III*, we tried to keep an original accent, comprised of various English regional dialects — something very rough, aggressive, brutal, as is the text of *Richard* as a whole. There is, however, a world of difference between the two texts, indeed one feels Shakespeare has captured a great deal in *Henry IV* despite what is often as brilliant in *Richard III*. The most obvious difference in the present use of prose made in *Henry IV*, roughly half the play, and again, generally goes to the tavern world, as the verse is to the Court. These actors crossing from verse to prose are immediately faced with a radically different way of speaking.

Verse or prose however, Shakespeare is either way always a very difficult text to make clear, and a basic acting problem is how to achieve clarity without becoming stilted and dull. Our basic concern at Nimrod is that Shakespeare, as with any contemporary dramatist, be lively, entertaining, and dynamic. The balance between the dynamic and special disciplines implied in a very flat one.



Nimrod's *Henry IV*



Overcoming prejudices

Some background first. Warren Mitchell replied to an invitation from Joe MacCollum in 1977 that the role of Shetlock — on the play did not interest him at all that much but *King Lear* did. We took it from there and scheduled the play for 1978.

I met Warren a couple of times in Sydney and talked generally about the play whilst he was in Australia in 1977. Afterwards we corresponded by cassette.

He had seen the famous Baz Luhrmann production for the RSC and been tremendously impressed by its theatrical vitality and clear story-line. This version had been heavily cut and ran only about two hours.

I knew from our previous experience in producing Shakespeare that there were certain prejudices to be overcome amongst our audience — particularly the schools. Shakespeare was boring because he was incomprehensible; he had no relevance to today; the plays were 'too long'.

So I was very sympathetic to Warren's ideas about a cut version of the play which would retain the basic story-line but lose many of the tale rises and subplots. He sent me Baz Luhrmann's script and suggested we use it. I must have acknowledged the tremendous debt I owe him as I incorporated many of his cuts in our final

production. Roughly one-third of the text had gone. Of course in such a truncated version many of the speeches that belonged to original characters were now given to other people. This created some problems in rehearsal where some of the cast felt their characters had been changed, but we finally agreed that our production was 'a version of *King Lear*' and that relevance to the original text would only hinder so, we played what we had.

The story-line was clear and precise. The play flowed logically into two parts, from the magnetic ritual of the opening scene through to the horrific blinding of Gloucester in Part One and from Edgar's entrance "Yet better than and known to be condemned" to the final tragic end.

Then we looked at the language in detail. Whenever a word or phrase was obscure we tried to find a modern equivalent. Thus Kent's "She summoned up her money, straight look home" became "She summoned up her household, straight look home". Sometimes, particularly with the Fool and Poor Tom it was difficult and on occasion we left the original. Sometimes mysterious words. One delight was a change from the Fool's "If a man's brains were in his heels were he not in danger of lobes?" to "If a man's brains were in his heels were he not in danger of children?" and the pun got a laugh at every performance.

In discussion with Peter Cooke, the designer, we agreed about the production concept: we went after an environment rather than a set, we needed clothes not costumes and we didn't want either set or costumes to pin the play down to a specific identifiable period. The result was a heavily textured flooring on three levels with a monolithic 'door' at the back, and clothes made of skins, felt and fur that looked as if they had been stitched by hand.

The play had sound/music specially composed by Jim Carter much of it emanating from a synthesizer. I wanted to avoid that too much disoidal off stage trumpet call sound that got so often lost. So much of the sound was slightly distorted.

"What is my action?" became the key question during the early rehearsal period. In asking it Warren was an expression not only another in his own role was questioned but in helping others to clarify their objectives. We laboured long and hard over some scenes, particularly the most difficult 'mad' scenes. Fortunately I had Robert Kenyon as Assistant Director and he was able to take other actors off and rehearse them elsewhere. Nonetheless the

Alan Edwards



scenic joke was being handled about "we're doing Act Two as a programme note". It was slow, grinding work.

Eventually the tale of the work began to be mastered and we introduced other problems: handling the language, verse speaking, shifting emphasis (I set as a girl William Poel's "Twenty lines a scene") and this without gibbering or hurrying. We proved it could be done. There were no games between scenes, as characters smiled as one scene the next scene started and the text was picked up. We tried to make the play flow and not let the audience "off the book".

Then came the run-through with costumes and props and the dress rehearsal period. Even at this late stage we were changing — cutting odd lines, putting back others, changing blocking. But under Warren's leadership there was excitement in the air and a feeling we were 'on to something'.

David Rinal did some beautiful lighting. Joe MacCollum has saved the company about speech generally and additively particularly. John Humphrey wasn't too happy about the light scenes, the awards kept landing, certain costumes didn't fit or were "bail to wear" the smoke gear wouldn't work — it was the usual story.

But it finally came together. Did we achieve all we set out to do? No. So we're all looking forward to reconquering the production for the September Centre in Sydney in September. But it was a success with our audience, particularly the 5,000 school kids who saw it, a lot of good notices and gave all of us who worked on it a tremendous sense of involvement. I think we all learned a lot.



Warren (left) and Alan Edwards in *King Lear*
Photo: Publicity Photos

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REFERENCES

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 Payton Thomas Melmore, Fox Clipped Out (1981)
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 Andrew Earl, Sgt "Mango" Morgan and Henry L. (1981)
 Bill Remington
 John Wilson Archer, Tony White Remington
 David Lyle Fisher.
 (Continued)

Since Wilson, who was brought out here for last year's Playwrights Conference, on the evidence of *The Evening Star*, should never have been allowed to return to England. Any one of several of our playwrights could have conducted a dramatological operation on the play and stitched it into theatrical shape. The Conference has got it all wrong. Playwrights like John Galsworthy need our help, not our tears. Indeed a policy of informal aid for would-be actors, poets, and dramatists could readily be implemented, though this would be a lengthy even in these heady days of American drama.

In general, the stewards of traditional conservative theatre in Australia can be characterized to reason unilaterally before a Big Name. The avant garde another pack of decorated cultural cringers, will usually grovel before a New Name. Deep down both groups share a delirium of Australia, to much so that, unlike P. White and E. Humphries, they cannot even bear to creatively utilize their names. They live in Australia but their minds reside in London or New York.

I don't know where Sean Wilentz's mind was when he wrote *The Eminent Domain* — it's one of those amorphous expressions that could be variously labelled a historical joke, or Dada, hip Lezbovidian serendipity, or just plain weird. Wilentz has snugged up a few satirical ideas, shuffled them, then left them marinated, another less-mannered to slurp to death. In fact, he throws them all away, like many of the lines in the play. You could say it was a *Duane's* success story.

Given Huppert's various choices, the immediate task for the director and cast should have been a reasonably reliable dialogue and interpretative stance on the text. The performance I saw was weakly and underprepared — understandably in a certain sense as the production had been pushed so early into the premature demise of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Large understatement was the production's lack of elementary dramatic and comic structure, all these incomprehensions arising due as much to the same level of



Robert Hemingway (Tony), Lala Pankas (Dorothy) and Jillian Archer (Sandra)
in *Hemingway's Accessory Motel*

also due to a failure to establish a set of recognizable conventions. If this left the cast rather rudimentary, it left the audience utterly transfixed.

The quality of *The Lowest Road* is not the comprehensible incomprehensibility of much of abstract theatre, where reality is wistfully and painfully turned on its head, its abstractions one truth more to willed indulgence and a rare miracle.

The games and humorous sports of the three women, with their anti-religious and anti-political imports, need to be openly and clearly seen as such, as the playful emanations of three distinct characters, as the satirical and cynical sublimations of those caught in some social quagmire. Instead we are even led to purchase

upon, the characters merge routinely, interactions are rarely face-to-face, sexuality is crude and male-imposed, shows find past art barely, the disordered theory ends up disordered practice. One marvels that Saxe Wilson could be linked, at any level, with Stappard, Houston and Hare if this is a fair example of his work.

Given these difficulties, Illinois Archer, Helen Hastinggus and Luke Pankas stress everything they've got at the audience, whether we seemed bored and befuddled by the level of energy and commitment, as if it were a game of hockey with only one team, no shots, no ball and no goals. The best things in the evening are the songs, usually not passionately performed by the cool

A very great performance indeed

ELECTRA

Figure 1

Decor by Seabrook, coordinated by **Maia Burdette** and **Paula Horne**. Mullerco, Shasta Company, Adornments, Shasta Mullerco, P.L. Created from © LPS. Created **Freddie Jackson-Jonger**. **Shasta Pressery** made designed by **Maia Burdette**.

Directors: David Rosenberg, Tom Kean, Steve Peltola, Michael Higgins, Daryl J. Isenhardt, Stephen, Sandy Barr, Christopher Weiss, Michael, Andrew John Shuman, Charles, Kathy Schmitt, George Sullivan, Kelly Schmitt, Judith McElroy, Jennifer Weiss, Eric White, Neal Ashman, Martin Shuman, John, Mike Ludwig, Stephen Peter Waudry, Robert Moore.

Let me unequivocally say that Frank Hammer's production of *Electra* for the MTC is the very best I have ever seen of. Good. Inarguably. Not that I have really seen many. Old hand I can recall Oliver in his Old Vic *Agamemnon* (he with Sept Thornehill as *Lacertes*, Walls as both *Clydeus* the King and *Clydeus* as *Electra* Elton Barker as *Medea*, Asheroff as *Electra* (he only time a performance from Dame Peggy disappointed me) with Catherine Lucy as *Clytemnestra* and Leo McKern the Tutor, and several local Australian producers (including of course Catherine's *Clydeus* for the Old Total).

Normally I am not enthusiastic of the prospect of seeing Greek films. For me

Sheff is usually too much thinking, long drawn speeches in high flower, rare transitions and generally stilted production. The *Albion* though held its spellbound, with a vast encompassing and straight forward production in which not a word seemed to be lost, and made it easily seem more of a play than a recitation. How much was due to Nick Enright, and Hanson's, may be follow simplified translation or in the latter's vocal direction we does not know. Possibly a marriage of the two.

The backstage beating of drums and cymbals at crucial moments heightens the suspense and frequently underlines otherwise silent areas of action. On the evening I saw the play, it was noticeably how gapped the audience was in the arena seats — one could certainly have heard that phenomenal gasp — which is surely the gist of a good conclusion.

A really comfortable, warm and rich set from Anne Fraser helped considerably, as did the crucial re-grouping and unromantic speaking of the Chorus. In fact the Chorus seemed to work together better than I have known at previous Greek productions, and certainly were not handicapped by grotesque masks as our counterparts, however.

Two performers jarred. Firstly Sandy Goss's *Chryseidomys fulvica*'s action, which was all right in repose and sometimes achieved results but all too often presented with a bright and heavy set, seemed to have wandered in from a much more modern play. Then there was Dennis Olsen's Tuxer, which, in clipped tones, seemed to border too much on some of his recent *Offert* and *Sailaway* performances. Yet Olsen certainly is an actor of considerable stature, so I was only bound

a person in the room, and really have no prompting for us doing. My theory is that he started off by giving his well known impression of a quivering old man, that she did not react with Hauser's approval, the director tried to stamp it out and is doing so with the actor and strains with the rather unsatisfactory characterisation he ended up with.

As Election's mother, Clytemnestra, Irene Hunter was right up to her very highest form, building up a towering figure that was grasping, chafing and howling. David Downer too succumbed with Gertrude making every phase seem monumental.

Ann for Hagen, after disappointing an interview with her. Miss Sadler in *The Desert*. *Stratford* gave a heartily desired performance in the title role of *Womanhood and Sin*, without, however, doing her best. Her singing and dancing were good, but her acting was not up to the standard of her previous work. *Stratford* was a splendid success. It was a very great performance indeed and if Miss Hagen was not a Lady on New York stage, it is doubtful if she would be the lady of the town with people opening up just to see her performance. I missed *Johnnie Malindang*. Did you better see this new Chicago talent about the same time. *Discora*, who like *Blondie* is possessed with the desire to revenge her father's death, must be a very taxing role indeed, yet as evidence that Miss Hagen has no intention of any substitution, New York is complete her acting range. Will someone please cast her in *Shine a Light*?

One is surprised that since *Electra* of one and a half hours is a short play, the BBC did not back it with a short cinema comedy. When the Old Vic staged it they also presented Chaitin's *The Woodman*.

It is a production without ideas

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[illegible]

A production that combines the undoubted talents of William Shakespeare, David Williamson and Peter Ceston should have been a triumph: the fact that it is a great deal less than successful is sad, but comprehensible. It indicates a failure of nerve.

Adapting Shakespeare, whether to give *Macbeth* and *Julius* a happy ending or to make some cryptic marital point or in the case to try and make the language and story understandable, has a long, venerable and indisputable history. We need not go so far, save to say that Shakespeare is a good deal better writer than his revisers.

What I would dispute is the case of David Williamson as that the language is almost impossible for a modern Australian audience to understand. Especially the language of *King Lear*, and especially when a Williamson has only done a line for line transmutation of poetry to idiom prose. It is rather like a

Classic Cottage

It seems to me that the problems of Shakespearean language arise not from the fact that it is Elizabethan English, but from the fact that it is dramatic. Elsewhere English written sincerely, for a particular play going class, is aimed up to that class about what they wanted: names of characters, complicated plots, poetry, allusions, motifs.

One has to ask what the essence of the play is: narrative or mythologized characters speaking poetry. Telling the story is simple; you could do *King Lear* in three paragraphs, but the bits missing, the purpose of the play can't come from characters: the most language is poetical.

However, it might have been possible to give a another language and another structure to achieve a similar effect. If the concern was for the meaning of the play (as the director says in the programme) then make a play and production about that subject. Don't confuse a battle with the strain men of academia with what happens in the theatre. A more audacious approach might have considered the power and sympathy of Cl Dumas' piece on the *Southernmost Shores* on Adams and Auler or Charles Marowitz's version of Shakespeare.

It may be that Williamson, who on more than one occasion has indicated that he thinks Shakespeare is unreadable,



Ismael West (Chorus), Jennifer Hagan (Illustra), Henry Robinson and Yelena Belkova (Chorus) in the MIT's *Alcove*. Photo: David Parker

feels that Shakespeare shouldn't be produced, as Trevor Nunn does of the Greeks, but to then do a version that is much less workable than the original is very strange. He has taken out the great speeches and exposed the crumbly structure and made a much diminished Lear.

Even the story of the play is no more comprehensible than it is in the original; there are still the scenes of characters, the multiple plots. And Cytton's production doesn't help either. The focus on Lear is split by his madness, and apparent equally with the subplot of Gloucester/Edgar/Edmund. A more meandering and precise procession of marvellous speeches would be hard to find.



Reg Evans (Lear), Joe Baines (the Fool) and Cytton's production of David Williamson's "Keep Lear" at the Shakespeare

Cytton has set the thing as a polytypic Shakespeare for a mystical reason or two, not apparent in the production. In this wide response we have a shuffling cast of actors of no great skill. Reg Evans offers a Lear of some dignity, but no power, who seems more pruned than essay. Neither he nor Cytton have solved the peculiar problem of the opening of the play, the bridge on which the narrative development depends. That is the willows of Cordelia is not conforming to the social mores required by her father, and the monumental arrogance of Lear is not accepting her agency. It's not helped by Jackie Kimm's Cordelia, who was too coy to be provocative. For the rest, the less said the better. Joe Baines's Fool shows that he should stick to music, and Robert McGinley's Edgar has a few signs of life.

Cytton has failed to give the play a purpose for being, except some randomised glosses in the programme. It is a production without ideas.

And David Williamson ought to have a think about who it is that goes to the theatre in this country and why. If it is a fairly middle class educated audience, then surely it is in the production that points can be made, not in fiddling with pseudo translations. And if they want to gather school kids into the bosom of the theatre, then let them use more imagination and less palming off with the language.

Colin Friels Darcy is something of a tour de force

LES DARCYS SHOW CEDODNA

MICHAEL MORLEY

The Les Darcy Show by Jack Hibbard. South Australia Theatre Company. The Playhouse Adelaide SA. Opened 10 Aug. 1973. Director: Ron Stone, Design: Richard Roberts, Lighting: Nigel Lawrence, Dances: John Michael Patten.

Les Darcy: Santa Pavia; Margaret Darcy: Susan Rogers, Neil Darcy: Robert Mills, Nick Darcy: Wayne Bennett; Joe Darcy: Michael Patten; Father: Lesley Noel Wilson; Wilma: Doreen Lee; Judy Darcy: Rachel, Christine Hansen, Les Darcy: Young Patten.

Cedodna: Roger Patten

Wicket: Lesley Mills; Game: Leslie Bennett, Del Molino: Stephen Darcy; Red Whisker: Garry Gair; Patten: Garry Gair; Judy Darcy: (Performance)

The SATC double bill of Jack Hibbard's *The Les Darcy Show* and Roger Patten's *Cedodna* is hailed on the program as a "double knockout". In its way, an apt enough description. For Hibbard's play at least leaves the observer feeling that he has been hit with something real and tangible. Patten poses, on the other hand, is more like an amateur featherweight with a powder puff punch misrepresenting as a heavyweight champion who duly tumbles from a glass jaw. One has one solid poke and he collapses in a crumpled heap of deflated ideas and humbled hopes.

Hibbard's vaudeville-can-sideline treatment of the Les Darcy story is exuberant, heavy, vital and constantly theatrical. One hesitates to proffer suggestions to a writer of his ability so the following observations should be read as a record of astonished firm plea — can we please have the next ten minutes featuring Darcy against the forces that finally defeated him? There is surely the material here for a half length play in which the sideline elements are more extensively deployed, in which Darcy's opponents in the ring and out are fleshed out and set against the central figure. As the work now stands, it resembles a first draft for a more extended play, a drama in which Hibbard could make more use of his skilled normalisation of ideas and techniques from Greek, Asian, and popular theatre.

I was left feeling somewhat cheated that more was not made of the American expressive, and that the parable of Darcy's situation seemed deliberately excluded. Not that a scenario along the lines of "the tragicomic rise and fall of the great Australian folk hero" is called for. Part of the play's strength is that it never overtly sets Darcy up as the archetypal Australian figure. He is an individual, and yet

generally because of this and the situations in which Hibbard sets him, he can also be seen as the expression of concerns and questions which are representative in spite of the swagger and engaging "talk of violence" tone of Hibbard's preface. The play itself seems constantly lightweight and at times almost constricted in its deployment of character and incident (though some of this is undoubtedly due to the direction). What one senses in the play and what Mr Hibbard undoubtedly has the ability to give us is something akin to these



questionnaire show thrown up as his objections on the prize fighting scene in the witty and perceptive preface to *Clashed! America's Professionalism*. "The spectacle of a professionalism armed hubbing forthfully for his buckskin, like a *torero* belling out, is one which ought to command any sensible person of the lady of prizing the actual combats in the 'principla' in a prize fight." The prize fighter is no more what the spectators imagine him to be than the lady with the wand and star is the sweetness to create a fairy coon."

The performances in Ron Blair's production are considerably more convincing and energetic than those on view in recent SATC work. In particular, Colin Firth's Dave is something of a tour de force, energetic, professional, and displaying a sure degree of physical agility as the loquacious workaholic (well, raised by Michael Butler

It was certainly not the fault of either that the play that attempts the play did not quite achieve the degree of excitement and release of energy that it surely needs. Similar in its way to Magrini's dance, it often out to be staged in such a way that the audience experiences a feeling similar to the shaman caused by a fast, intense goal, or the collective release of breaths at a rallying track that allows an ecstatic act. Here it seemed almost an afterthought, in spite of Frick's skilled and rhythmic combination of dance and hearing.

At Margaret Dancy, Lou Dagman was impressive, avoiding for the most part the pitfalls of the postmodern dance improvisation and concentrating on all the aspects of the casting. Looking at times like a larger, more formidable version of the Ambrosio Parkers' character in *Psycho*, Dagman managed the mother/son exchanges well and neatly turned the character past the much bristlier mother clashes. Indeed Mark was too successful as the father, though not quite physically right for the role, she could have done, one felt, with a little guidance when it came to adopting the male persona. The other characters, with the exception of Judy Davis as Wanda, Lou's girlfriend, seemed rather pallid and unconvincing.

Man Star's direction lacked focus and tended to lose the performers on the three signs, allowing their random and lengthy entrances and exits. Far better to have staged the piece as a miniature with a gallery of figures playing locations to the audience. In this way the excellent songs, which tend, alas, to get lost, could have been more effectively presented.

The initial bout of the evening resulted in a double victory to Roger Palacios over both cast and panelists and the reviewer, who returns at the novel conclusion of the fourth round (appropriately entitled Wedding). Wallowing around in another's empty pool of free association is not my idea of theatre and what a horrid patch of images and words from Oriental theatre: *Sanderson, Binkley, Jung*, and the "American Connection". I could only conclude that the author must presumably share the view, expressed by one of his characters, that "sense is the very last thing I need." My sympathies to the ass, audience and whoever else desires.

THE GOOD PERSON OF SECHWAN

MICHAEL KOTHE-BISCHAU

The Canal Street of Brooklyn is Herald Street, is New
 Town, Boston (the Capital) is New, New York Street.

[illegible]

The major disadvantage with La Roca's queue of professional artistic directors and amateur curators (further complicated by the institutional involvement of the professional TIE team) is the unreassuring of the end product. Just as Rick Baillargeon's excellent *Peking* life was marred by several lamentably weak performances, so this current offering is well below the standards we have come to expect of La Roca, and is only quadratically rescued by an effective score of a good perfor-

It's particularly unfortunate that it should be *The Good Person of Szechwan* by my reckoning one of the great plays of the century which has suffered in this way. A masterpiece like this, which we so rarely see once in a decade of badly, needs the attention of the most experienced and most fully aware production forces available, not to mention a young working standard cast, uncertain direction, and truly dreadful sets and costumes. There wasn't a moment of pleasure in the whole first act, and only critical duty kept me there after intermission. At the end I wasn't sorry I'd stayed in early for the extraordinary levels of irony which the script achieves in its resolution. Peter Gottschalk as the good person Shien is forced to adopt the harsh alter ego Shue. To was good enough to mark her as an actress of promise, and Mike Vangelis's Shue (a father was an intelligently low key and amusing performance. Most of the rest of the cast appeared never to have set foot on a stage before.

The Great Power of *Indochina* was praised by Huxley during the darkest days of World War II, and as a parable of what a great power has to do in order to survive in a world of greed and exploitation. It is a consciously cool look at western capitalism coming through the lens of an oriental tale, as Huxley himself said it was. "The parable form, which demands without protest and without possibility of evasion how shabby and superficial a society it is in which a man can only be good and decent

when he is regularly bad"). To be staged effectively and honestly as requires a director who has at least some idea of what Brecht's stage theories mean in practice, a rigorous exploration of the possibilities of the parallel form, and an acting group with enough worldly knowledge to understand that the revenues of the script are the revenues of life and not merely direct action credits.

This production had none of these and La Bonté, though a lovely place and an 'alternative' theatre in one sense, is still part of the fun and some opening night circus. I don't think anyone looked up to the post-performance foyer party with even the slightest trace of pretentiousness.

Little stimulation for an audience

POINT OF DEPARTURE

NATHANIEL AND PULLMAN

[illegible]

I suppose every theatre aficionado of my generation must have once been in love with Jean Aronson. Minister of his qualities of constant perfection, worldly cynicism and uncompromising sincerity must still hang shivers of nostalgia to most of us, I think.

In my case the only professional production I ever decided on the scene that everybody was paid) was *The Wake of Sir Everard* at the Perth Playhouse in the '30s. I think I must have read everything that Anasazi had written by that point. Incidentally, in the Fall of 1969 still inspired by the revolutionary events of 1968 (led by young people not too far removed from Anasazi's Antigone) I saw the opening of his *Three Antones*, another version of his *Archivists* at *Temple Theatre* in the drawing rooms of several churches, which had become his chosen style. The last scene very far from *Antigone* and *East of Eden*.

So it seemed an impossible but intriguing idea that the Queensland Theatre Company should choose to revive the *lancier* in their current season at the SJO Theatre. What would it mean to have the

(gown, peevish, peevishness, painting, painters reviving, women on the pavement) and on those long reiterated nights when it was their right to love? They lived out historically for their Pyrrhic success (historically) their innocent, horny ideals of Art, Free Love, Free Thought and so on, making, in the words of Goethe the decrepit, Prospero (Arthur, Dignam) perched high like Poe's raven among light bulbs and cruel time scaffolding heroically growing at last rather than in place, a modest contribution to the culture of their city on his case-like (but postwar) and intimate rubber goods, but all to what end? The searing sound of Mr. Bog's jackhammers. A long rattling rumour of the harbour's bottom in current boots, century Made, the great man's eager, catholic despair (Steve I Spanx, typical, again! Banishment) in perpetuity to Mount Erebus of all places, along with other wartime refugees ("Mount Erebus!" shrieks Princess (Catherine Turner), the sturdy stripper and good-looking Catholic in one of the play's more brilliant simulations: "What the fuck would we do in Mount Erebus? Erebus?")

As Shawarm's production, wry and moon-drawn, and by the third performance smoothed of all its first-night rough edges (all, that is, except Arthur Dayson's electrifying dance, by now a traditional feature of the Sydney stage) is in my view the only thoroughly good production yet seen of a Caryl Chessman play. Having precipitously from Brian Thompson's written Symposium set (I am thinking) taken in problem, seen and loudly bemoaned to the problem of a tiny stage, the beautifully orchestrated cast, like talent in a stained glass window, between them create a glowing scene to savor and its comic.

From an immensely incidental position on the one small stage, all of them here, without their chosen Parsi bardside, using their socks and other accessories all in the name of the workers' revolution, the breaking of the oligarchy and the rain of the Parsi, it is difficult to pick Eghman and Gaden part smoothly in as usual, rivets that an already above most male performers of their generation (through Gaden, who based his rechristened writer on me, had better bloody watch out, and Steve J. Spence, the multifaceted Sunday playwright proves abrasive, spunky and menacing as a prominent Sunday actor.

About home Chae's Pandora, however, I am somewhat undecided. Her darling maternal carnality I fear I have suffered before, and when, as a devil's memento which she should have claimed the blood and made each individual her next up like quilts on the bedchamber porpoises, she merely seemed a corporate sponsor with a quaint hobby, and yet her warmth and her belabored sorrow staked in the memory, and unlike all recent Doctus corruption she and Newt's Hewitt, in the more obligatory earth mothering close. As Timberhill the transverse whiplow John Ransom, the original O'Malley, alternately radiant as a blarney wig and handsly made in a top and truncheon, shows coverage, toxic and dramatic precision beyond the call of connoisseurs, data, and Ned Riddle, as

antagonist, Jim Malley, is in good health but that consequently instead of a rich, hearty capable and undeviating actor becomes hoarse right after the first half hour with a glottal gutteral upbidding has caused the crusting him in the first place, and surely nothing one might stand to anything that moves Geraldine Turner, on the other hand, who gave pitifulled pause to several convinced homosexuals on the opening night with her ornate-frasier trip, has presently that combination of qualities (dignity, vagueness and enormous beauty) that should secure her place as a great help of the American musical stage, if such a glory will come in the chosen nation's nation.

It should, it must! For too long have we laboured in the salt wilderness of ignorance of history rather than with casts of three or four moments, on the stage, genuine that this made more commercial sense than song, sociology and superlatively Gershwin, (theatricality) in an age of dwindling salaries and colour television. From O'Malley down to Eric Mailey now, and back to Brooks and Shakespeare and massed ball and legend, to cherish that what people will come out on a cold night to see is theatre and nothing less — and theatre to them is a lot of actors on a big stage doing clever things to music that can burn on the way home in the car, like *Rain*. Tyrrell is unfortunately lovely music on this particular evening, at least one song of which, the elegiac "Lark of Heart" at the end of Act One, which should stand as Dyer's epitaph, would in a slightly better world have achieved that place on the jukebox now straddled by Leonard Cohen.

The honors of the evening, however, go to two Indian Robin Nevis, an Ethel Maitley. Elsie's connected suburban sister forever quivering on the verge of radiant beauty and unimpaired intellect, once again, as she did in *Sonnet* or *Scorpioides*—creates and delivers an archetype so truly that we feel we have known her all our lives. But best of all is John MacGregor as the scruffy little hacker *Frangipani Waterfall* ("Crack, a lot of great money back") whose professional notes from every crack in his dilapidated body and crack in his indelible voice. Her *Liliputian* tragedy, her *Stoppage* and her pugnacity are conceived with such assurance and such poetic overpowering honesty it takes the breath away.

It might be appropriate to say one more thing. It is that, like Hemm, who is no way inferior to Shakespeare in her two-way mirror, her verbal facility and her insights into characters, does as least lack one ability that the compromised did back so long ago. Thus it the ability to knit things together so they seem (only seem) to both begin and end. To this long lack on Hemm she should devote some study, and rather less paranoid. Was I direct her attention to that other great poet of the Australian theatre, just down the road, Barry Humphreys, to see some part of how it is done.

With that small reservation however (and it is a small one) go see it. It's a path through broken bottles to its door. Australia needs you.

A triumph for all concerned

HENRY IV 1 AND 2

THE

[illegible]

Great productions of great plays can define our interpretation of a whole era. As an Elizabethan times the capacity of the histories for oblique comment on contemporary politics, their richness and range, and following from that their popularity, is brought out in the full at Marnold. The stark winter of discontent is discarded in favour of a season of unsettled weather, the nature of classical comings and the renewal of the romantic form are reported in favour of a richer view of comedy as part but not parcel of experience. Tragedy's finch and individual contradictions, followed in the depths of Horatio and Falstaff given way to the seeping nature and the burning collection of characters of epic. In short the histories provide a follow up of life.

Richard Wherrett's adaptation of *Henry IV* in compressing the two plays into one has allowed him an even bigger canvas, a scope which takes us from a marriage Hall (Globe Hall seems to shed a decade of light) to a King, and within that the light for a new order in England as the medieval ancient regime is bulldozed away. A nation emerges from the paucity of both myths (Glendower) and the dead hand of rigid values (Richard III) to find an even, new

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together to be seen with a longer vision parallel become apparent between scenes which would not otherwise have come together, workings are made not just in the service of compassion but in passing away repeated situations. The Bear's Head is seen not only as a place of wit, escapism, escapades, and the pleasures of wine and food (on which the audience literally partakes) but also its decline as an antiquated hotel, with a kitchen where dressing up before our eyes, Falstaff added to it the diseases that are the lot of man, and reputation reduced to vulgar stinkiness. Falstaff's last meals with the Lord Chief Justice and the corrupt proceedings of assembling his charges of "poetical rascals" are both seen before the Shrewsbury conflict. This becomes the single apex of action with the battle lost from Part 2.

The heavy chestnut of whether or not Parts 1 and 2 are as Doctor Johnson's says, 'only two because they are too long to be one' is irrelevant here, the issue is rather whether the assemblage works as a dramatic whole. My view is unreservedly that it does.

Taken as large the emphasis falls not so much on Hal's "redemption" as the eyes of his father, but the deeper issue of his emergence as a ruler. John Bull's Hal, then, is a thinking being from the start, not the meekly dissolute set against the heroic mania of Hotspur. His "I know you all" are the words of an heir apparent experiencing the richness of a merry England but remaining unworried by it. The rejection that must come is portrayed when Falstaff and Hal each play the role of Henry IV, the one is a delicious rascal, but no king, the other is a realist who with grim forward looking finally answers: "I do, I will" to Falstaff's pointed "Nuneh use, plump Jack." The moment is electric — one remembers how simply such lines must be played when Part 1, where Falstaff escapes rejection, is past alone.

Here, and it is a mark of the greatness of Frank Wilson's portrayal, Falstaff is taken through to his reported death on Mistress Quickly's final obituary which tells just about of sentiment. He begins as that delicious symbol of life released by Henry's ascension of the throne. At first, he is undeluged, a "father" to Hal who affectionately loads the post's hair, a great body but into age by hours of cups of sack and minutes of caprice, and an exposure wit that steers him through the narrowest escapes. There is both a strong bond and yet distance in the relationship with Hal as affinity made the more true by the betrayal such perpetuates on the other. Falstaff must needs be exposed, he stands for mankind, for an ancestry that deserves property rights, sexual mores, social restraint. Yet his conspicuous parent appearance: The Gadshill robbery is set against the death of England by Henry, colour is too abstract to withstand his selfish pragmatism — men in war are brutal for display so why not choose the means, and justice is to be hoodwinked as an age verification of ultimate values.

Peter Cargill, long denizen Hotspur contrasts here more with Falstaff than

with Hal. Doubling with Arden's Pistol seemed inspired in adding poignancy to the juxtaposition of Hotspur's ideals, but perhaps ironically as Hotspur an almost machivellian style failed to cohere with the production's lefty (jacobinist) north, an accent often appeared fairly absurd. The daring temper, the quicksilver emotions, the cavilling and constant search for the grand of honour went all there, but technique dominated over art. Hotspur's position is too narrow, he is at his most vital when ascribed a horse, only fully alive when on the battlefield.

As Falstaff waxes into decay and Hotspur falls to rebellion, the Prince gains strength. He knows the tavern life is no answer, "If all the year were playing holidays to sport would be as tedious as to work", and that constant warmongering is no way to bring health to the nation, though he does not shirk from battle. Eloquent and eloquent both would be kings, but it is a ruler who can encompass and run above both who has the rightful hand for the crown.

Alexander Hay in the anonymous Henry IV feels the full force of the troubled man

and the punk at his means to the throne. Once a divinely sanctioned king, he has been overthrown, only a crown has been grasped from a rightful ruler whatever his wrongs, the King must ever be fearful of those with powerful reach. Hal is certain "You won't it, were it, kept it, gave it me". Whomst wants the relevance to our age to be reflected in the corresponding uneasiness that must seek infect the state after the overthrow of Whithorn. Yet he is rightly not too liberal when the gambols are under ringing and more complex than a one to one hero would allow. Fraser has not even the rubbing of an old soldier as a serving prince.

The design concept stems, not from light grey suits but the paintings of Brughel. The set by Tom Langford, though cheese-box like in its ingenuity, never interrupted the action and coped admirably with leaders that range the length and breadth of England.

That the burning halpings of life on a War and Peace scale should have been attempted by Whomst with a cast of thirteen is to be applauded, that it came off is a triumph for all concerned.



Brian Campbell, Bill Christie, Robert Mearns (Swin Cossin) and Kerry Walker (Mother Courage) in MIDA's *Mother Courage*. Photo: Robert Walker

The quality of strolling medieval players

MOTHER COURAGE

DOROTHY HEWITT

Mother Courage and Her Children by Gerold Heide. MIDA at New Scene Theatre, Seattle. Opened in June 1994. Dates: Aubrey Melton, Timothy Bates Murray, Michael Walker, Anne Conway, Greg Marshall, Phyllis Williams. Dates: George, Kerry Walker, Kate's Joanne Whaley, Bill Blue George, Ross Green, Robert Mearns, and John Hughes, Douglas, Robert Alexander, Yvonne Pitt in Phoenix. Dates: Douglas, Phyllis, Stephen, General, Patrick, Bill Christie, Mearns, Young, Scott, Lawrence. Directed: Campbell.

Mother Courage and her Children worked fantastically on Jane Street because of the honesty and simplicity of Aubrey

Melton's direction, some good strong amateur playing from the company, and the extraordinary power of Kerry Walker's Courage.

The homegrown clothing, Brecht's place, brown half-curtain, the influence and graspings of peasants and soldiers, the colloquial breezy translation, give the production a rough homegrown quality, so that the epic journey through the thirty years war was always tough, strange, humorous, tragic, and utterly believable.

The direction allowed Brecht's great wit to illuminate the way Jane Street theatre with its minute space, so that the audience seldom lost their sense of a chronicle, a moving play. The actors had the quality of strolling medieval players who had set up their booth in the village square.

Kerry Walker is, by all the laws of averages, too young to play Mother



A canny course through stylistic changes

A HAPPY AND HOLY OCCASION

COLUMBOWISEN

A Happy and Holy Occasion by John O'Donoghue
 National Theatre Company, Playhouse, Perth WA (Theatre 10
 Jan. 1994) Director: Stephen Barry, Design: Ross
 Kennedy's Lighting: Rossman Clark, Stage Manager: George
 Tuckwell
 Mary O'Malley: Jenny Hoffman, Henry O'Malley: Andy
 Wright, Father O'Gorman: Jeremy Hogg, Sister O'Malley:
 Leslie Wright, John: Lesley Edgar, Margaret: Lesley Wright,
 O'Higgins: Tony King, Uncle Maurice: Alan Spence,
 O'Leary: O'Donoghue, Margaret: Peter.

Contemporary Australian drama — indeed Aust Lit in general — owns a very real debt to the Roman Catholic Church, especially to its Indochinese Wing, poor old Catholic Education (Irish Australian Branch). Without a reaction to its process of implacable instant and irrevocable Guilt Pacemakers deep in the psyche of its charges we would have no Tim Kennedy, Peter Kenna, Ron Blair or Jack Hubbard. To their regret the Dorothy Howells of that world have to rub along as best they can with mere High Anglican Boarding School, whence their own admission is at best a pale imitation. Doctor Jack and I might come to blows over whether the Marxist or Christian Brothers were the more adept at locking the right mix of physical and psychological error tames, but it would be a quibbling doctrinal mugging.

Of course acknowledging the Church's debt as patronising the quill is somewhat backward prone, rather like thanking the pax, plague and MACHAETH for Webster and Shakespeare. For every headway into imaginative limbo are there countless trials aching dully in public service awaiting their persons, waving Liberal (time the demise of the DLP) and carefully steering a nimble path. In the Jack Cade rebellion in 2-Henry VI one of his followers, a certain Black, suggests: "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers!" I see his point, but I for one would want to put a clip in the magazine of my rifle for a few other trials as well.

John O'Donoghue's *A Happy and Holy Occasion* is another exploration of the Catholic family in Australia, with strong currents of appropriate Irish alienation: it has sufficient force and originality of theme for it to be possible to say that it is not unnecessary in the light of Peter Kenna's *A Head God*. The first may come for us to cry "A momentary on the Muckel, but not get O'Leary, not yet. As with the

Nan Holman, there are some things about which we must keep plugging away. True there will always be aspects of such plays unfathomable to the truly, such that I had to explain to a fellow critic what a Child of Mary in My ropes began: "Take one impressible young girl and a blue veil, stir carefully with —"

John O'Donoghue's play has been sufficiently discussed in these columns for it to be unnecessary for me to go on about it at length. Suffice it to say I found it a canny's egg of a play both structurally and thematically — that is if the canny in question likes two eggs for breakfast. The expostory bones stick out all over the first act, and characters tend to come on and tell (rather than show) their characters at length.

There are aspects of the play on the border of caricature and parody, and moments of extreme feeling and insight. I kept finding myself aware of influences from twentieth century drama from all over the shop, from O'Casey to Kenna. I must say however that I did not find the device of the young would-be womanizer "stepping the action" to come down and give the future history of the other characters the jarring non sense which did I had one or two questions of fact which doubtless a quick placidist to the Archbishop's Palace here (yes, he has one) would clear up. I thought, for instance that twice was marginally underplay for a necessary (question's), and does an apparent take a fourth into the scenery with him? Focusing games only.

Both Stephen Barry's direction and the playing served the play well. Mr Barry steered a canny course through the stylistic changes and the actors handled their deviously Joan Sydney grabbed the part of Henry Brock Muckel with both hands as did Margaret Ford sniffing her nose. Craig Edgar Muckel's Tocky Kenna — somewhat of a one note part — had the right air of misadventure, embittered manliness, fear. Daly with spiritual legacy, and Ivan King made the most of the old and, Huan O'Halloran. It was also a fine debut for a very young actor Jeremy Spence as the boy Clarity.

I found that the performances of Jenny Hoffman as Mary and Lesley Wright as Father O'Gorman were gems. A welcome return of being to Perth. She managed here to bring off the difficult feat of making Mary's incomprehension of the nature of her feelings for the priest completely credible, and the nervous tension slipping towards madhouse chillingly plausible. Lesley Wright is one of the most unpretentious actors around. His skill is unquestionable, but the results of his playing (shortcuts in scenes (to me, from out front) that if he likes what he is playing and gets with it he can be remarkably powerful, as he is here in making the Johnson, merely indus-

Courage, but this is an extraordinary actress with the guts, the presence and the voice to outshine the problems of her youth. A piece of inspired casting gave her the lead in the *Shammas/White* film *The Night*, the *Proverb*. It was another inspiration to cast her as *Courage*. Her strength held the text and the company together on a barely adequate stage.

She had great support from Kevin Walsh with the speaking part and body as the male Katriin, and Angela Panch, fresh from her triumph as the sweetest bride of Jimmy Blackman, who played a double role as one of Brevett's high cheekboned, boueie voiced, haggard whom, and the terror-stricken farmer's wife clinging to her piece of ground.

The acting boners went to the women, but the men provided solid back up, particularly Ron Rogers as Bill, the elder son, John Clayton as the Cook, Robert Mearns as Owen Cheese, the younger son, and Robert Alexander as the chaplain. Clayton is always good in a role that needs his particular quality of realism and honest playing.

There were many scenes to remember — the parting of *Courage* and her Cook, the death of her elder son, the mourning of Katriin, the stifling where and her geriatric lovers, Kenna probed high on the wall warning the sleeping town with her beating drama. Her fall was perhaps even too realistic. Fear for the safety of the actress seemed to interfere in one's willing suspension of disbelief.

Of course there were problems... *Courage* and Katriin dragging the wicker around that very small circumference with my room to submerge, the sometimes warring voices in the songs, the character of some of the "crowd" players, but the marching band and the marching songs all helped to create the rhythms and the epic proportions of the play. The tableaux around the wicker were particularly useful in elevating the journey. They worked like inspired film clips, and the actors' funny hat and funny boots became, on that bare stage, images of solid beauty, because happenings left over on the search of war.

The Joan Street production proved once again that a great play does need a big stage or a gigantic budget... what is needed is perception, imagination, toughness, honesty, and a little ingenuity.



rubber priest not only credible but likable. If on the other hand he seems not to get with the part — if I feel this with his March in *Droneer* — it looks as though he is just winging it, playing from stock. I'm pleased to see him show us again what he can do with something that challenges him.

They perform and perform non-stop

BIG BAD MOUSE

MARGOT LUCE

Big Bad Mouse by Philip King and Pauline Carey from the play by Paul Suter. Adel Theatre, Adelaide. W.A. Premier. **Paul Suter**

From the cast: Jack Cunningham, David Higgins, Keith Sully, Alan Spencer, Elizabeth Connors, Mr P. O'Haregan, Jimmy Edwards, Mr Simon, Mrs Spence, John J. Cunningham, Joan Young, Clara Power, Jo Berry, (Producer)

Big Bad Mouse is the sort of play no self-respecting critic goes to see, let alone praise, but much up coming out bubbling cheerfully about their not making them like had no more. Performers, that is, tell plays. It is, in fact, your re-broadcast. And, had I been treated with the contempt it deserves, and typed up by the simple means of using, or abusing it, as a Vehicle (capital V), in which these two very funny men and treatment groupers, Jimmy Edwards and Eric Sykes, soliloquised around the world on something modestly described as a seventh farewell tour.

The story line has the sort of plot that these instead of thinking, and results in an intertype. The setting is the office of Cheesecake, a banana factory. Mouse Mr. Bismore (Eric Sykes) is bullied and belittled by bossman Mr. Price-McGrawgreen, Jimmy Edwards, until one day the poor little man is mistaken for a sex man who has to leave Wardsworth Connors, after which he becomes a salubrious who turns out, not merely the office doorman, but also the frustrated speaker secretary and the unapologetically awkward lady director (not to mention scores of factory girls off-stage).

They have found a way of making this dull situation by the simple means of giving priority to the relationship between performer and audience. What a public round of applause greets Jimmy Edwards' first appearance, he obligingly makes another entrance to give the audience a chance to turn it into an occasion, and keeps obliging till they get it right. When his telephone book meets with delight but nobody giggles, he turns the repeat performance into a frantic round of applause by reminding the audience that the call is "personally on stage" able to see and hear, not like the fellows on the box, who don't appreciate such signs of approval. Establishing the audience's sympathy for Sykes is simple. Edwards merely tells them to go away on the applause, too much of it being bad for Sykes. Thousands welcome for the man with the shy smile when he edges onto the

stage. And so it goes on. They trade on the impact of their personalities, well defined and well-regimented — bawdiest restaurant Edwards, with Sykes more reserved, with a slight sense of humour.

Between the two of them they have a fine selection of visual jokes, from the forlorn hand-dial telephone picking to the various funny walks and absurd bits of music that come straight from the silent cinema. Verbally they delineate some venerable jokes and comic routines by sending them up, parrying and snuffing them so that they turn into something else, and of course there is always Jimmy Edwards doing his trademark solo. They perform and perform, non-stop.

Yet, there is a surprising and — notably the mighty Sam Young, who has been in the show since it started in 1967, and who, as Lady Cheesecake streams across the stage like a tank belaboured with his pieces. There is also Ward Armstrong Elizabeth Connors, turning herself into agonised looks as Miss Spencer, the vicar's assistant, who has not even found out what the birds and bees are supposed to do, let alone people. Her metamorphosis after being given the last of jobs by Mr Bismore is truly startling. Jack Cunningham is notably glamorous as the long-drawn-out boss, and Keith Sully in the office junior has a longish scene playing straight man to Jimmy Edwards, and one keeps for him to be back, which he doesn't. Jo Berry manages to make her own good looks contribute the last of the quarter of female job choices, the deputy, short-sighted ugly girl who ought to be grateful for being accepted by a pore in the dark.

When one comes to think about it (which one doesn't), the basis of the whole play is funny and offensive, and a good target for any self-respecting woman's action group. However, the performers manage to defuse it, by giving practically anything that interferes with their comical routines, and so one finds oneself joining in the positive laughter of an earlier, more barbaric age, that had no such feelings about finding nature's sports ludicrously funny instead of visible signs for treatment.

Echoes of recognition

HANCOCK'S LAST HALF HOUR

MARGOT LUCE

Hancock's Last Half Hour by William Williams. The Drama Centre, Adelaide. W.A. Premier. **William Williams**

From the cast: David Higgins, Keith Sully, Alan Spencer, Elizabeth Connors, Mr P. O'Haregan, Jimmy Edwards, Mr Simon, Mrs Spence, John J. Cunningham, Joan Young, Clara Power, Jo Berry, (Producer)

How good would this play be if Hancock Williams did not have a ready-made framework of tragedy? The real life figure of the end clown, who was a regular guest at millions of homes ...

the ready reference to Shakespearean anatomy — one keeps asking how far on, the audience, are supplying the material. The facts given are sparse and oblique. We watch and listen while a man is drinking himself to the point of suicide. But would the whole thing be quite as powerful if we didn't know the man is Hancock? Is the process of self-destruction dramatic enough in itself or only if the victim is a household name? How far do we care about the pudge man in the windy tooth. Merely bracketing an between conferences with the woolly moon-head on the wall and the tips of vodka shared with a captive porcupine?

In fact, of course, we care quite a lot. The man has flashes of wit. He is, on the whole, unaggressive and concerned with the world at large. Above all, he is not a hero — he is reminding on his failed life, but beyond the personal dilemma he asks the larger questions, ranging widely as a complete reader of microphysics. The basic philosophical questions, even if only sketched in somewhere between the pen and the mouse-hall song, constantly hint at possibilities of a lively mind before it was drowned in vodka.

The reasons for his despair are only gradually pieced together as the dialogue passes over it — unspoken, suppressed bits of weeping, heavy pieces of unspoken information, half-finished jokes, witty one-liners. The transition from success to failure is much less precisely charted than the constant preoccupation with Henry Faery. It seemed worse as if there never was a moment of true success — just successes, instantly demanding — Mr Hancock, my smoking lamp! And then there were the failures — in marriage and business partnerships. One cannot quite believe that this funny and intelligent man could have had such an unrelenting run of bad luck, but that's the way the play has it, which possibly makes it not so much a piece about a man as a piece about the nature of failure.

Much of the enjoyment in the play is contributed by the verbal high-jinks as in the last that can stand for the play as a whole, when Hancock shouts out of the window — "It's all so desperate!"

Good (bad) is the role a very good indeed. He is of entirely solid build but here manages to be puffy and brittle, spinning his final intervals with the snuffing, self-indulgent passages and even in moments of disintegration never becoming mask-like or embarrassing. He does the masterful turn with gusto — heating strongly into song, throwing away from with the knowledge of the skilled performer Hancock was even though he is not attempting an obvious imitation, the admission, the occasional gloom and the overall last of the character even when of occasion.

The Greenhouse's stage area has been reduced, with the seating encroaching on the tiny study room with its antique bed, griffin on the wall in work with a view) and the game of thoughts and dream on the window — giving the whole thing a suitably claustrophobic note.

WITOLD GOMBROWICZ
IN BUENOS AIRES

World Company is **Home Acre** by **Roger Federer**.
Signature Theatre Company **Children Have Bad Dreams**
Opened in June **Directed by Jeffrey MacIntyre** **Lighting**
Tony Martin **Music Edward Elgar** **The Play** **1991 Season** **The**
Woman **Jodie MacIntyre** **The** **Company** **1991 Season** **The**
Real **1991 Season** **Edward Elgar** **The** **1991 Season** **1991**

The cast showed a gleaming appreciation of the fact, and a gleaming awareness for conventions about theatrical conventions. At its many auditions in the place (just not anything — especially in theatre — is natural). There are only things that look natural and things that don't. None of the performers looked natural because none of them were naturalistic. It was probably inevitable that such a local crowd found them "unnatural." They didn't have randomness or development — at all, not. (I said I have been that they don't need to.) They did play actors or music (I'll show) but perhaps the director told them not to. And they didn't have a motivation for every line they said? (Can such things be?) But then perhaps motivation is not one of the, sort of, things?

The Canberra season was marred by the fact that The Bolshoi loses the original Newmarket production left the cast alone. The Newmarket season, there were some symptoms of a getting-to-know-you struggle with the new cast members. Differences were soon settled since all parties were on the same side but the struggle between Chloë Sevigny and the Canberra classic ended as it usually monotonously every year. The last season, however, was

Oh, come, the fact that it is not necessary to understand doesn't mean that there isn't anything to understand. It's just that trying to follow a literal thinker's antiques when you are from birth a native in the modern climate of linear logicity only makes you nervous. The millions of Japanese who hate the 50 years that witness to the "World Government" as a play about history, a history that can be seen in its clearest form in Japan. The language was breeds pacifism. The Red Army changes from an atheistic nihilism to religious awe and finally breeds tolerance to the central Truth of his faith. War is understood as needed pacifism is accepted, justice remains here for a time equality with men to discover them and childbearing, when again becomes respectable and all no doubt lead to more wars. To all this there is only one possible defense for the creature - nihilism. When World Government was living in Argentina, for instance as The Soldier expects he had completely understood his outer self to the most extraordinary point of all - that of everyday backsliding among the Argentinians. And with this drawal, which keeps you immune from fortune, will also keep you immune to the pain of others, war and history will begin all over again. When then can you die? When a play about it ceases.

A black and white illustration of a woman standing, facing forward. She is wearing a long, floor-length dress with vertical stripes. The dress has a high, ruffled collar and a small, dark belt or sash at the waist. She is also wearing a small, dark hat with a bow. The illustration is simple and stylized, with a focus on the dress's pattern and silhouette.

REFERENCES

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Bookfish: Is Uncle still? School's in.

Uncle: Couldn't hear.

Maria: This is important. Whenever the army wins, the traders followed. Everyone and everything lived on the move, right down to the last newspaper.

Maria: Another newspaper.

Bookfish: People do bad work. Probably stolen.

Bookfish: Just a minute. If everything was on the move like, how could you find anyone? Tell me, this it wouldn't work here. People are supposed to stay put here and even then you can't find them, is that?

Uncle: I give everyone three months to move and sometimes they never come back. More do, though. People are more fond of their goods than their freedom.

Maria: But what if you want things too, Uncle? Take everything with you. What if the whole city started moving without being asked to do that?

Bookfish: From what I can see, people with no money start that's just enough.

Uncle: Not like Bookfish. They cling like flies, where to be caught.

Maria: No point a property — the system there (unclear) — no private property is held trusted. For the Migrants, home was wherever you stayed for the night.

A sort of clothes came down the line. Uncle would take what is left. Bookfish a family unit.

Bookfish: Are you telling me we should all pack up and run around England like a lot of vagrants? Is that what you're saying?

Maria: I am suggesting to you Bookfish that the only way to keep from running property can be avoided by running no property at all.

Bookfish: That's just the sort of argument you can expect from a peasant. What do you say, Uncle?

Maria: Uncle has requested work papers. They give him some of his business.

Bookfish: True enough. Take over the heart of the business. I would prefer to see Bookfish come in here every week with his Sunday man when over a doctor on The Crown Jewels.

Maria: All Uncle wants now of life is your wife Bookfish. What do you want?

Bookfish: Oh?

Maria: What do you want from life?

Bookfish: I don't know. Same as what I've got. I suppose. Maybe a bit more.

Maria: A bit more?

Bookfish: Well, I wouldn't mind carrying up one shoe. Not likely though is it? I mean with people like you wanting chairs on both and all things. What do you want Bookfish?

Bookfish: Not much.

What do you want thing. Well I own it sometimes anyway. And I own my own books and some of course. And I own. What business of yours is it when I own?

Maria: The truth is Bookfish that you and I, we are on the same side. We own nothing, nothing to speak of I know it, you don't. That is the difference between us. And when you do manage to scrape enough money together to come something, a well fed on way down here eventually. Am I right, Uncle?

Uncle: Yes, sooner or later everything goes up the spout. Five years, seven, about, what's not books — everything. You Doctor, are one of the few people I know who actually reads the books he gives. For most people, books are for passing and nothing else. This sort of man is a good brother. The great writers look as ready a prize as the books. If you were to write a book, Doctor —

Bookfish: What, him?

Uncle: — It would look the same as a volume, all Shakespeare. Here the only good thing about a book is its cover.

Maria: You define the a minute of the dog-eared reader. Thank you. (to Bookfish) Is very difficult.

Bookfish: Oh?

Uncle: For the rest.

Bookfish: Oh, yes. My son. Almost larger. Here you are Uncle.

Maria: You see Bookfish when the attitude of the bourgeoisie or that as no more for self-interest in matters of money. Someone pays you for your ideas —

Bookfish: Not always doctor.

Maria: Someone pays you and you give the money to someone else — to your landlord or to such here. The bourgeoisie have made you their spirit. You are simply offering money for them.

Uncle: But Doctor, I have my debts too.

Maria: Let us suppose, Uncle, that Bookfish owned his family but he did not have enough money to pay you.

Uncle: Or Alan, it could not give it to him.

Bookfish: Come you couldn't write. Thanks to Maria.

Maria: Why not pray?

Uncle: Because I have already given him money when he begged his last in the first place. If he fails to get the money, then I can tell the son to go back my way. The same goes for your family, Maria. Since you did not refuse it, it is mine to sell.

Maria: As this as a considerable profit.

Uncle: A profit if I sell, a loss if I don't. (pauses) Look around you. What's that? (Alan looks behind him, there is a greatly heated market for second hand work. The same goes for spectacles.)

On a shelf, choose. Try them on. (Maria selects a pair from a box full of spectacles) Here are the books that would lend on those. (Old books have little use for their weapons when a war is over, so they bring them to me. And when they die, their widows can't stand a loss on their glass eyes and window sills, so they bring them to me. And when at last, widows turn to help, long does it take their fancy and face they bring it to me. Look at it all running up and down, spectacles and dead books — who wants them? Who needs them? You bring them to me. Look at it or not, Doctor, I shall bring them to those streets and wherever there these books hang they are golden and complete.

Maria: Look at this waste and waste me a figure. (There must be no race for all bookshelves in dealing with the bourgeoisie.) How much is that worth?

Maria: The only thing I can't give you a price on Doctor, is a theory.

Maria: It's a pity you can't write. An intelligent theory will outlive all your shelves of tarnished steel.

Bookfish: Just a minute give me. Exactly who is the bourgeoisie you keep going for about?

Maria: He's the man who owns your shop. For man who owns your house. The man who has cornered the meat ring at Southfields. The bourgeoisie leads on making money in commercial confidence, confidence in trade and traffic.

Bookfish: Sounds very healthy to me. What do you say, Uncle?

Uncle: Goodbye, healthy.

Maria: How can you say that? You don't see poverty. Where the streets are misty crowded and the houses humming, with silence and splendor, there you find it. (Plaster like here?)

Uncle: I give credit only when it's required, Doctor, I have no use to come here.

Maria: What are you talking about? You feed on people like a raven. You live off dead men's eyes.

Uncle: Only glass eyes and generally, I was used they have no more use for them.

Maria: Do you know what could it?

Bookfish: Oh, poor! Credit, perhaps, is what you've been asking off — and even when you come to follow.

Maria: Credit is what Bookfish depends on a explanation —

Bookfish: Explanation?

Maria: Explanation of what income by capital. Of the protection by the bourgeoisie?

Bookfish: Of me by you mean. The given you mean to the value of 10? And I have not seen it happen yet. You're quick enough to not what I give you but slow when it comes to giving. You're exploiting me, Maria, in a very high way.

Maria: No more? Am I profiting from your work?

Bookfish: You're living off me — you and your family. It amounts to a theft.

Maria: If I had any money as all Bookfish, do you think I would have been sitting here on a green sofa reading my own books?

Bookfish: It's because you don't pay me that I've got to come here too. You look your best, but I have to keep my clothes. Thank about that?

Uncle: (Unclear) we have reached an agreement I think. As it happens, I am almost sure. Perhaps you might consider the decision elsewhere. You are somewhat my generous plan?

Maria: Very plain. Here is the sum of the whole business selling the poor against the poor. We answer together, Uncle, you must be given.

My sister is under.

Uncle: Doctor, Maria —

Maria: I have some more pledges before you come Uncle.

Bookfish: Here, what's going on?

Maria: They are not the only one to give clothing Bookfish.

Uncle: The business is closed for the evening, Maria.

I will accept no more pledges.

Maria: One witness, Maria, Maria.

Bookfish: He's leaving.

Uncle: It's not his doctor. Come back Monday.

Maria: Oh my, ha. There on the stand.

Bookfish: He's under way.

Maria: Up it and down it is up.

Bookfish: Now Maria what of the stand.

Bookfish: Well?

Maria: Put it on the counter. Two weeks. There you are Uncle. Give me a price. I won't go until you do.

Uncle: Very well. There are signs of course. I can't give you much.

Maria: You a price to begin with. Now look Bookfish. The money I owe these days will keep the bookshelves facing the window well?

Uncle: You are a regular customer of course, Maria.

Bookfish: (Hurt, you are taking them all you?)

Uncle: Only to oblige the doctor.

Bookfish: But you said you were closed.

Uncle: I am never closed in handling. The books you see me on. This I would say, is a case of oblige. Right doctor?

Maria: For that late as days I have led my entire family on level and progress. My wife is ill and so is our three months old child. I cannot and could not call the doctor because I have lost and he won't come. Even if he did, I have no money for medicine. The best thing that could happen would be for the lady to throw us out the door.

At least I would be out of the 4, 23 I owe her. It is unlikely she will be so obliging. I owe you for more Bookfish. I also owe the books the widows, the man with the eye and the grocer who (pauses) how much for these?

Uncle: (Hurt) That's the top.

Uncle: I owe Bookfish 10.

Bookfish: (Hurt) That is no more in.

Maria: Maria is ill and ill down in my

brother.

Booth: Look, we don't have to do this.

Uncle: I'll decide. That's all I can do. We are not yet free in three months. You know that I'm giving you a chance.

Mary: Here you, Booth. Here's giving me a chance. Come on uncle. I'll give you my opinion.

As before, she takes them off.

Booth: I'll give you ten shillings to keep your trousers on! If you do anything like that off I'll give you nothing. This one has not final offer.

Mary: Should I take a Booth?

Booth: Look here, I'll give you your shirt. You do as have in do for.

Mary: But I do have no. I am to pay you, then to pay off the others. After another consideration, uncle I accept.

Uncle: Right. Here is your ticket. And here is your money to pay shillings. Now please, you leave the shop alone.

Mary takes the money, uncle wraps the clothes, starts to duplicate what she has done on the day on the stage. He wraps the belt and the bag in a wrapped up. Mary runs to Booth and looks out the door now.

Mary: This is Booth. In payment for a month's rent.

Booth: You didn't have to do that for me.

Mary: Oh but I did have to Booth. They're only taking a month of profit because you have seen what I have done to get you the money. If you had, you would have taken the money you a chocolate. All over this, now do this to find your family. Now you have seen it.

Booth: But I have to do that and I can't go long either, except that you.

Mary: You don't even own this. Anything we have is strictly on loan. Next month of March come nothing Booth.

Uncle: Right.

Mary: So why, Booth, do you so stubbornly resist the abolition of property? Why is it so essential to own something?

Booth: Well, if you own your house or business, you're an upstart! You'll be for his. I'll be for my own piece.

Mary: A foolish ambition.

Booth: I've got hopes of owning my own shop one day.

Mary: The bourgeoisie hand you hope long is, can they hand you money. And when you go, let up with hoping Booth not try to make sense, they will not be sorry to you.

Booth: Yes. I won't happen here. We don't go in for trading across. You might get this sort of trouble ahead but not here.

Mary: Working men have no country Booth except poverty.

Uncle: The shop is closed.

Mary: However. Class conditions in English society have reached a point unexampled in any other country.

Booth: How do you know?

Mary: A bourgeoisie with independence and productive forces is confronted in England by a proletariat — that's you Booth — which also has no president at present and cannot afford it.

Booth: What do you expect me to do? Can Uncle's friend?

Uncle: The shop is closed!

Mary: Your shop is never closed while there are profits to be made. But listen here. England will go the way of Venice and Venice and Holland — a glass suspension of world made.

Dr. Engländer takes the French phrase, the wordings.

The English have found the end which plays itself.

Uncle begins to bring his drink hand bell.

Uncle: Is anyone there?

Mary: Yes! We are here, Booth and I. Let us start the revolution right now Booth and shake the cookhouse on known. I'll.

Booth: Here you can come me out of it for a class. Where you go today?

Mary: Sorry where you are uncle!

Uncle begins to ring the bell with increasing urgency.

Uncle: Help! Murder!

Mary reaches for a tablecloth to put for table.

Mary: Even if anyone could hear you can't hear, they wouldn't hit a finger. And when you lie down on the floor, they will all pour into the shop to try and the victims you have stolen from them over the years.

Uncle: No — please —

Mary: Look at that, Booth — I wanted much, opening in a course of effort, opening for the first time a lifetime of bloodwork. I'll stop the bell again.

Uncle: Please! Please!

Mary: Listen to him squealing for the good measure of the bourgeoisie.

Booth: Avoiding the others! Here, go away with that!

Mary: screaming. Uncle! Get up. Come on get up!

Uncle: Don't hurt me. I'll give you back your things.

Mary: Listen to his beginning Booth. He isn't only going when they are concerned. There is only one way of shortening the monstrous death pangs of the old society — revolutionary terrorism!

Uncle begins to ring the bell again.

Uncle: Help! Someone for God's sake help.

Mary: Your God will not hear you. And Mary makes the bell from Uncle's hand.

Booth is peering behind the door over the door.

Booth: Hey there's a party coming this way.

Mary: the Clerk! Not a word-out of you or I will take you like a stamp.

Please during which the policeman passes. Booth says, Uncle and starts his hands as if he is at Mary's mercy. The Policeman goes. Booth drops his arms and relaxes.

Booth: Where? That was a close shave.

Mary: Where? Why did you do that?

Booth: Do what?

Mary: Put your hands up. You weren't in danger.

Booth: Yes, I was. What if the police had come at? He would have seen Uncle here, and we were there with you. He might have jumped on the wrong conclusion.

Mary: What conclusion?

Booth: That we were about to give Uncle what for.

Mary: And to me too.

Booth: Not me. Not me give. I was just sending my first class now.

Uncle: That's right Booth. Get the policeman and I won't meet you in court.

Booth: Court? What court?

Uncle: Well we have the machine charged with attempted murder.

Mary replaces the table.

Mary: No one is going to be charged with anything Uncle. And why? Because nothing happened.

Uncle: Are you saying then you're trying to split my staff was nothing?

Mary: What's the talking about Booth?

Booth: I don't know give me. I never seen a thing and I've been here for whole time. He's.

Uncle: Get out the both of you.

Enter Laurence.

Laurence: Is this where you are? I've been looking all over.

Uncle takes the opportunity to escape to the back of the shop.

Laurence: Hello, Booth! Oh hello.

Booth: Hello Laurence! Looking up again? Just got out of the shop for Laurence.

Laurence: Something? Mary! What's been going on here?

Mary: Booth —

Booth: You gave her?

Mary: If Uncle has given for a coat she'll trust you will be so good for your word.

Laurence: What conclusion? What's been happened?

Booth: The Doctor here's been campaigning about the shop like a man. Give uncle the right of his life.

Laurence: You've been doing what?

Booth: Do Mary Booth, you worry doctor. But we might to get on of fast before anyone comes.

Mary: Booth, you stole by me then. Why did you?

Booth: We are on the side of the counter after all aren't we?

Mary: We need members of the proletariat in the party. You and I could start a revolutionary cell.

Booth: If you and I may have much longer we'll be alone — at Westminster. He'll be back in no time.

Laurence: What?

Booth: Uncle and the whole police force. Come on! Alright, here at your own way. See you tomorrow.

Enter Laurence.

Mary: A pity. We could have used someone like Booth.

Laurence: I was never here.

Mary: I think do you mean?

Laurence: If I didn't make eyes at him and wag my tail we would have run out of time a long time ago. Come on Mary. Get your clothes on and we'll go.

Mary: I can't. I've pawned them. They went up the house to pay Booth.

Laurence: What and I have a word to that. Mary. Oh that's lovely, that is. I spend weeks looking for a girl with a promise and he'll give his money. They're going to love you when you turn up late. Booth. Mary. Looking like that. Come on, you'll be late. Come here. From when Booth says, the place will be swimming with police on a constant way. And from Mary is wondering where you are.

Mary: Were there any letters today?

I was hoping that English might have sent money today.

Laurence: Money? What's that? I've forgotten what it looks like.

Mary: Don't talk to me about it. I spend half my life trying to understand how it works and the other half searching for it. And look at me! I'll be late in this morning, simple one by a high price who's so entangled with it you just we call him "muck". (Laurence has no money) Don't you be depressed. We shall beat them in the end. Laurence is a man that's looking me. Mary. I'm in with it.

Mary: What's the matter in being?

Laurence: You're got enough problems of your own.

Mary: I'll see.

Laurence: I'm overdone.

Mary: So in the end. What's more?

Laurence: Only I'm not laughing.

Mary: More of us has been not properly to it any wonder our bodies are in chaos. My body is a mess of blood —

Laurence: I don't want to know about it.

Mary: How can we bodies work properly on the food we get.

QUOTES & QUERIES

(Continued from page 1)

of Armin Director Sir Robert became the Board's unanimous choice the moment his availability became known to us.

His credentials speak for themselves, for example he has had an extensive working relationship with the Old Vic Company both as an actor and director. He has worked with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company at Stratford on Avon and been actively associated with such influential guests of the theatre as Michael Rediff and Peter Hall (the late Noel Coward) and the late Tyrone Guthrie.

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It would be pleasant for me to visit (talking now about some of the things I have in mind) but I have many other on which I am already working.

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International

(Continued from page 17)

answered me simply they seem to see the "Japanisms" of it all without asking themselves in what it consists. When Japan there are many different Japanese, however. The language, the professional styles, the themes and preoccupations, have much more variety than they do, say in Australian theatre. Our theatre has drawn on limited sources. Japanese theatre has drawn on China, Europe and America, and of course on its own special, long explorations.

What the best of Japanese theatre has is a commitment to a special manner of presentation. The most efficient Japanese theatre has always been minimalist: it is the denial of an action, not the play. And it is how to perfect a particular style to its limit, even if that style detracts. Each good Japanese playwright maintains the dramatic. The best has never been more than one or two or five characters in a production, the limit of signals if anything. And Japanese audiences have the patience to allow a

particular group to perfect a new style. That's why these contemplations of actors and directors calling themselves directors don't work. They never get to the destination as before they find themselves going back to the beginning.

P.S. I have just received a letter from Sandra Adick with extra information on developments of recent days. I have accepted small parts of that letter to add to the above article.

Kenzo Hasebe's latest play *The Year of Political Freedom* is set in the Bangladesh as lately dictated by Kamru Akachi. This Tokyo season follows a season in the provinces in June. It appears to be a Tokyo version of the *Onegin* legend.

Kenzo has a little woman (at the end of time as *Heaven* in Tokyo) I was disappointed in it. It was called *The Stars of the Dawn*.

"Tessa" Robert Scherer, a rock opera, opened at the Saito Theatre on 12 June and *Yasunari* Shiga's new plays (two in a row) apparently did well in London recently and opened at the Royal Opera in Kooribara Hall in Nipponia (Tokyo).

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Just what is a classic?

"Never but never dance to the music of Debussy", wrote Isadora Duncan on one of her letters to the world. "It is all surface emotion and stammering, there is no music for the soul and the spirit".

Yes well, by this stage Miss Duncan, whatever her other achievements, was well suited for her musical eyes: listening to the (beethovenian) symphonies that had no need (for embellishment) whatever rule one wants to use to measure the "soul and spirit" in a piece of music, the sensuality is superficial only in a superficial (mis)use. Vaslav Nijinsky and Isadora Robbins were not superficial dancers when they cut Isadora's J. Agnes de Mille's *Alas* for a ballet. Robbins himself has said that *Alas* is practically fool proof, only a crude amateur could look bad in it. That's true as far as it goes, but it takes a great dancer to touch all the nuances and highlights in the work and not just reveal one aspect at a time.

Nijinsky set his hands in a walled glade with nymphs that seemed to have stepped right off an Aeneas vase. Robbins, 1952 version set it on a dance studio on a hot afternoon. Instead of nymphs and shepherds coming away we have two adolescent dancers stretching, posing, analysing themselves and discovering their music sensually. But, at another textual level, they don't do it for themselves but for an imaginary studio mirror that stretching along the front of the stage, shows the audience in, so, to a degree it is deconstructive and cool, the work becomes a closed universe, a self-contained lyrical work of art, like that sculpture because it occupies space, doesn't merely occupy it.

Like all dance, it asks questions of the audience, not only on a formal level, but

on an imaginative, emotional and kinesthetic one as well. Is it really that we are excited here, or a desire, is it a sexual encounter or a "technical" and, in the final analysis, regarding that mirror, are we watching two dancers, or their reflection?

As to the performers in this Australian *Alas*, all of them revealed something about the work, none of them contained it totally, that has only been achieved by its original cast of Edda Wilda and Tansy Loring. For something of all of these four came together however and you have a moment of the work's greatness.

The opening night cast of Gary Norman and Marilyn Rowe were curiously separated. Norman conveying the serpentine sensuality of the *Alas* and Rowe the "cold" detachment of the girl, but they didn't connect. Craig Sterling and Christine Walsh enacted the dual encounter aspect both explorative of the character "voidness" but little more. Ross Stratton and Michaela Kirkable for once, didn't work at all. It was here a rehearsal, stripped of all wonderment and joy as if these were two hardened professionals who had gone through it all before. Robbins has said himself that *Alas* was only really work when both dancers have a "virginal" quality about them, untouched and unsoiled as it is the awakening to sensuality that makes.

Of all the *Alas*, David Birch was the most complete and satisfactory. He looked like a startled Isadora, he had that air of discovery and tentatively handled the girl as if she was part apparition, part erotic fantasy and part "technical exercise". Marilyn Rowe seemed to be more at ease

here more the leaning Isadora, the part little ballerina who'd washed her hair and come into the studio to pose, and far more the distant "toughie" around whom the possibility of encountering a lost officer hung like a warm but delicate perfume. It was a lovely version and I hope it grows (what I think would be the ideal partnership would be David Birch and the Dance Company's Sheron de Certe, but ...).

No matter what the casts were this production of *Alas* made up for the stinging statistics of Maxine's *Manonville*. Agnes de Mille of snappy dancing but no heart or mind and the curiously laboured and half-baked configurations of Graham Murphy's *Tekton*.

I've heard that few of the dancers in the AG gave the choreographer any help or expression as the creation of this work and I'm afraid it shows. (But then what can you expect when the Administration demands a consistently high performance level an exploitation of our product. Once again who can be blamed?).

Murphy states that he wanted to distort in dance terms the architecture and sculpture of Spanish born Eric Garcés. It strikes me that he had this concrete image too firmly in his mind and when the dancers didn't give a dance, that "image" just took over and robbed the work of any spontaneity. One of Murphy's girls is to upset expectations as to how a dancer phrase should progress. He creates deconstructing and increasing tension in a movement and makes it look fresh. However in some of his former work and to a larger extent here in *Tekton*, these widespread results seem to be an affectionate, a conscious striving for a signature style. I do wish he'd relax. Unexpected poses and

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distorted configurations are all very well but they tend after a while to become so-banana... computer programmed even.

Teklon (performed by dancey puppets, the ideas of Gaudí's architecture that that I'm all that familiar with it) seems literal. Men and two are used for a missionary purpose: shapes and angles gather and disperse as if for no other reason than to gather and disperse its so fractured that one can't even see the fracture lines. Even geographic televisual plans those which I think the work does its little share a little of progress is a predictable one even.

Not that everything in the work is a mess: there are marvelous instances in it, one in particular where at the beginning and end of the piece the corps as a single body sways around the stage leaving a handful of solists like driftwood on the sea shore and gathers them up later. One duet in particular, danced with stuporously nervousness by Ross Sirett and Christine Wade split and loses its protagonists like some human equivalent of mass and space and their relationship of each other, but that's just it, it seems an equivalent.

The duet by Yvan Paillet was mimicking in its own right. It didn't distance from the dancing, enhancing it even, acting almost like some calligraphic clue to the going on on stage, and as such was most welcome.

I find that Teklon came upon Murphy too soon after his enjoining in Pappi and the work subsequently took and, wonder why around looking for something. It wasn't emphatic enough, it wasn't fluid or slow enough, really it wasn't anything enough.

Neither were the earlier performances of Crichton's *Roscoe* and *Jahel*, which as far as I was concerned were a slap in the face after the invulnerable performance: the work returned home to Sydney back in 1974. The choreography looked half remembered, the dancers went through it by rote. Only Marilyn Jones used the opening night with her warm portrayal of *Jahel*, but even she seemed to play one note too often. All the aspects of love and emotional involvement were there but I missed the growth of *Jahel* from the immature young girl to the deeply resolved woman in the drama's end.

Ross Sirett and Michaela Kerkela seemed to add as the second end of *Roscoe*. Sirett danced and remained calmly around looking for *Roscoe* but didn't ever seem to find him and Kerkela's portrayal of *Roscoe* looked like it was inspired at times by the outside. They danced their duets adequately but little more, and there has to be lots more of Crichton's epic poem to going to live. Alan Alder glowered and bawled outstaring from start to finish, picked at such an emotional speech all the time that when he was killed off one was nearly thankful that a stern push insurance had been dispatched and one wondered why Lady Capulet was making all the fuss on his funeral bed.

Tom Simpson in a later cast was much more satisfactory in this role and gave the rest of the cast an object lesson in acting technique. His *Typhoid* just put joy into one emotional worker at the beginning and



Gary Newman and Marilyn Brown in the A.B.'s *Afternoon of a Fox*. Photo: Bruce Green.

trouble along on it until the end, he was truly comforted by *Jahel*'s safety when he caught her flitting with the striking *Roscoe* at the last. Simpson took his burden to hold up the performance from the rest of the cast, but it was a heavy burden, mainly because the orchestra seemed to be dropping off from London.

The Elizabethan Sydney orchestra can rise to quite capable heights when under the baton of a Borge or a Taiter, but here under Robert Roun it literally plodded its way through Professor's paragonate score.

But perhaps this is all symptomatic of the falling away being held at the Australian Ballet these days, by the Administration at least. Had the cheapest means possible to achieve the greatest box office return. I can understand why it wants the A.B. to have proper adorns, trunks and rehearsal quarters in Melbourne: but one wonders what they will do when they find themselves in their bright shiny new quarters with a demoral

ized company. Regarded as a serious, long rehearsal and a rigorous prep.

The Administration (Peter Balcan) gave entrance to a programme sale according to the fact that the A.B. is a classical company founded in the classical technique (as is the New York City Ballet Mr Balcan but it is not). As such it should vary much whether it should concern itself with these 'modern works with their ornaments and writings and cacophonous music' (Murphy's *Teklon* be warned). It thinks it should focus only on the 'classical' works.

Apart from all the subjective value judgments falling around one could ask what is a 'classical' technique? *Teklon*'s *Sven* and *Jahel* was "classical" in its day, the Ballet *Roscoe* works were 'classical' over and people hated Martha Graham when she first started out, now all of those pieces are, by common consent, 'classical'.

The rest of the world seems to have matured since then and only the Australian Ballet Administration seems to be selfly conservative.

First performances with enlarged pit.



Robert Homan (Cherubino), Isobel Buchanan (Countess Almaviva) and Gloria Fowler (Rosanna) in AO's *Marriage of Figaro*. Photo: Bruno Garcia

Weekly it automatically, as new productions marked the first three weeks of the Australian Opera's major winter season, which opened at the Sydney Opera House on Wednesday, June 14.

Indeed, it was even being cruelly alleged in some quarters of the daily press that the real opera drama of the moment was off stage rather than on, focussed on the fluster of a takeover bid staged by a few shareholders in the opera world at the annual general meeting of the AO the following night.

But it turned out to be a month far from devoid of artistic success, even if the first new production of the season, and one of the undoubted highlights of the year, at least in prospect — from Switzerland's *Mozart* — was not scheduled to open till July 5.

Even at opening, in the certain knowledge that opening performances are never any season's best, both *Madama Butterfly* and *The Marriage of Figaro* were very good indeed. If *Figaro* was undeniably the better of the two, that was only to be expected in view of the fact it is perhaps the company's most universally acclaimed production and has been consistently in

the repertoire for seven years.

The only newcomer in the opening night cast was Elaine Homan as Cherubino, but there were considerable improvements to be noted in the performances of several of the old hands — in particular, that of Isobel Buchanan's Countess.

It is hard to know where to start in talking about this *Figaro*, for the greatest strength of the 1971 John Copley production right from the start has been teamwork and that is still the greatest strength. Good to begin with well above the Australian Opera's general performing level of the time, it has steadily gained in stature ever since. Each individual performer has grown over the years — as any performer worth his salt always inevitably does, and at the same time the collective depth of their combined interpretation has developed enormously.

I have seen this particular Copley production eight times so far. All right, even with Ronald Manonagis as Figaro, John Pringle as the Count, and Rosam Farnock as Marcellina. Mel Worrie-Smith has done us of my Bartolo, Robert Gard has of the Basilio and Glavys

Fowler, four of the Susanna — in each cast including the first and the last. I saw Jennifer Derringham seven times straight as Cherubino before that year's performance by Homan.

When one considers that these eight performances were spread over eight years and that no more than two of them fell in any one year, that is remarkable stability of casting indeed, but far from resulting in staidness and monotony in performance the very stability of this *Figaro* cast has resulted in a fairly steadily rising standard.

Predictably, the old hands have long since to completely mastered their roguish roles that the most that could be expected of them this year or last, was that they should maintain and slightly refine previous excellence, and that is precisely what they have done. Thus the most fascinating performances of this particular opening night to me at least were Isobel Buchanan's Countess and Elaine Homan's Cherubino — though for quite different reasons.

Buchanan had bothered me when she first played the Countess two years ago. She sang beautifully as she has always

done since she has been with the Australian Opera, and she failed to convince me she had the role under control dramatically at the bar always back, for instance, Patricia under control in *The Magic Flute*. This year she is singing even more beautifully than before, and tickling those French airs with considerably more self-confidence. But far more important from the point of view of the overall dramatic success of the evening, she has acquired in the interim the extra stage experience necessary to be convincing as the ever so slightly elevated and anaesthetized and dignified woman she must be if she is to contrast satisfactorily with Susanna's less sophisticated but equally effective sort of womanhood.

Having no qualms for some sort of Figure remains prior to my recent performance aside, for I saw her do three Barbarina in that AD production, as well as an excellent Susanna in Adelaide earlier this year, before she dropped up as Cherubino. It was no surprise that she succeeded almost totally as Cherubino just as she had succeeded almost completely as Susanna (Barbarina is hardly a big enough role to warrant an attempt at assessment of comparative standards).

And after having spent a good deal of time talking about the vocal refinements of the Figure, it is only fair to conclude with a brief accolade for conductor Richard Blomgren and the Elisabeth Svaling Orchestra, which responded by and large magnificently in his sensitive direction. In my successful triumph — in this so unconvincingly was — the conductor must inevitably claim a significant share of the credit for getting together the fragmented bits of excellence of individual performers, and making them into a cohesive whole.

One vocal complaint, though a strangely out-of-place pillar, in the Easter Island style, involving a rather large overblown belly named directly at the audience, seems to have infiltrated itself into Act IV in the aftermath of the fire which destroyed the original Figure set earlier this year.

The winter season opened, of course, with a rerun of last year's *Donizetti* which started off most unimpressively but ended up on a most moving level. Despite the best efforts of Carlo Felice Cilliani, who was mounting the house, the RSO's first act was very sloppy at detail: the first brass rendition of Puccini's quotation from the American national anthem was really pathetic enough to make any self-respecting expatriate American feel a need to stand up and protest.

But things improved dramatically in the second act, with beautifully rich Puccini string sounds coming out from the newly enlarged opera theatre pit in an ever-whispering forest of melody, and by the end, aided by stunning vocal performances from the two leading ladies, the run of Act I had all but been erased from memory.

Two leading ladies in a *Donizetti*? Yes, for much of the credit for the success of this particular opening night event is attributed to Jennifer Birmingham's deliciously wistful Susanna, which acted as

a magnificent foil for Leona Mitchell's Cio Cio San. I was not as aware of Mitchell's immense vocal power this year as last, when she made quite a stunning vocal impression before she ever appeared on stage, riding effortlessly over the top of the old stage choros, but there was no dearth of power when it was needed, and her acting performance was outstanding in its nuance, detail as well as — in the final moments — the grander gestures of hopelessness and tragedy. She still does too much crawling about after her suicidal lady friend, but a good deal less this year than last just about none at all would be very better.

Birmingham provided a deeply sympathetic foil to Mitchell, as she must if *Madama Butterfly* is to transcend the year prior soap opera. She sang the role much more effectively than last year; equally important, her characterization was superb throughout.

While it was pleasingly sung, by and large, Lamberto Packer's Pinkerton only occasionally came to life dramatically; admittedly, he was hampered by a temporary limp on opening night, but there was a good deal more to it than that. Pinkerton is not entirely lacking in depth of character, he must be seen to develop

from thoughtlessness to remorse as he realises how he has destroyed Butterfly. This programme was virtually a best from Packer's performance.

Robert Allen's Sharpless was suitably benign and well sung, though he seemed to have some difficulty with some of his top notes on the night.

These performances were the first staged in the opera theatre of the Sydney Opera House since the enlargement of its orchestra pit at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars — and it is pleasing to be able to report that the results seem to more than justify even that large expenditure.

The pit is still less than optimum, of course, and has not yet been put to the test of trial, which will crop up in mid August when Wagner's *The Mastersingers* of Nuremberg opens. But as well as enlarging the pit, the recent renovations opened up its top somewhat by the installation of wire mesh across a portion of the balcony, and the improvement in terms of darkness of sound, particularly for those sitting in the stalls area, is dramatic. This darkness of orchestral sound seemed to throw out the pit/stage balance during Act I of *Butterfly*, but performers quickly adjusted to the new reality: balance of the house and the balance stage has been near-perfect.



Leona Mitchell as Cio Cio San in A.D.'s *Madama Butterfly*. Photo: William Munkley.

Sydney Film Festival: Australasian opposites

The only Australian film in the Sydney Festival, apart from *The Night the Power Went Out* which opened the fortnight's proceedings, was James Ricketson's *Third Person Plural*. It was made in a few weeks for \$35,000, which is a cue for somebody to say, "And that's just what it looks like". But in fact it doesn't look especially hurried or under-financed. The locations are a harbour-side park and playground, a yacht, a complex for old people of both sexes, and two modest apartments. The nearest thing to a star in the film is Bryan Brown, the interesting and quite subtle actor who is becoming known for several excellent performances, notably as the husband in Chris McCausland's disappointed young wife in *Love Letters from Terrible Road*.

So in the sense that *Third Person Plural* is a market movie made with people who have yet to draw a bargain in the market, it can be said not to have demanded a lot of money. And it is not the lack of money that causes the film to almost fail, as it does. It is the lack of shape in the script, and the windy, formalist dialogue which sometimes seems designed to confuse rather than clarify, that they are repetitive and banal. There is a way of using such speech as realist rhetoric, if severely rationed, it can be made to work. In this case it doesn't work.

The story is a simple, probable one. A man named Terry has a boat which sleeps four. He spends his friend Mark, a biologist whose subject is snails, aboard for a weekend with Danny, a school-teacher who tries to make tacitly committed films of old people and Beth, a young wife and mother married to an architect. The architect is also snail, but can't make it, so he stays at home with the small child. The only one used to the boat is Terry, an astrologer, or perhaps show-off would be a better word. They crash around the harbour, eat Australian, drink champagne, sing, talk but say nothing. Danny works on Mark, Terry and Beth keep into a bank. When the weekend is over Beth wants the love-affair to continue but not on the same terms. She contemplates leaving her husband, to Terry's embarrassment. Mark and Danny make it. He loses her with snails, the boat has with sociological "concerns".

And so on. Earlier in the Festival, Ricketson's *Orpheus* reached the short list of Greater Union Festival candidates, and won a commendation from the Reuben Mammalian Award judges and in fact the style of both films is similar: uncommitted, loose, ad libbed talk, a cast in which the characters seemed to be interchangeable. It was pointed out to me (later that the four principals of *Third Person Plural* had a curious physical similarity: their hair never was long ones. When they leaned together over the watermelon they bent a

recognition to four artists. Experienced directors would have looked around for a snail race. And, incidentally, none of a distinctive feature. In radio the races would not have mattered (though the races would) but in films races are important.

James Ricketson wrote the screenplay and directed the film. The arresting photography is by Tim Cosan. The Australian Film Commission put up the money, and was right to do so because Ricketson will undoubtedly make a good film when he starts telling his actors what to do and say and keeps a tighter rein on the whole enterprise.

In enormous contrast to Ricketson's *Orpheus* was the NZ film *Sleeping Dogs*, which followed *Third Person Plural* on the same night. It is a piece of far-shin-boy's own-paper adventure that brought whistles, cat calls, hoots and clapping from the audience in recognition of its splendid absurdity and a lot of twenty credits from NZ Government subsidisation, all of which are pilfered and/or mislaid in the film.

The film is the first fictional feature film made in NZ in eleven years and has done very well at home. I am told, before coming up at the Festival. The director is Roger Donaldson and the principal players Sam Neill, Ian Mene (*Murphy* of the NZ/ABC series about a union leader seen here in 1976), Neven Rowe and the rising American actor, Warren Oates.

The story assumes that things go so bad in NZ — similar patrol shortages etc. — that the hardline PM sets up an anti-subversive machine here which in turn spawns a guerrilla and resistance movement. Heroes take to the hills, moving by night against Warren Oates' mercenaries. Sam Neill as Smith of no specified occupation chooses to retire to an island with his dog, encouraged by the fact that his wife has ditched him for better played by Ian Mene. But in this apparent haven all hell breaks loose.

There are shootouts with bodies mean, diving into a swimming pool, and spectacular chase. Smith and Helen escape the maddies in a truck carrying fat loads for the slaughterhouse and then begins a long and somewhat boring trek through the bush. The ending of *Sleeping Dogs*, if predictable, is also the occasion for a laboriously attenuated death scene from Mene, whose talents need to be controlled by a stronger hand than Donaldson's Mene shows the honor of the film script. Taken from the novel *Smith's Dream* by CK Scott, with Arthur Sheehy.

The script is full of holes, but with men and vehicles and aircraft roaring about it that nagglest New Zealand scenery it probably doesn't matter too much.



Margaret Cameron (Beth) and George Sheehan (Terry) in *Third Person Plural*

Foreign Films

Probe Compromise and Inertia

Solrun Hoaas

Limited to a non-stop first week only of the Sydney Film Festival, this view can fortunately cover some memorable low-key films, that might otherwise be lost between Alan Bennett's *Soyuzdetfilm*, Lars Bannell or others of the second week.

Even after thirty films the first day suggests both for Krystina Zdanowska's *Compromise*, a subtly inditing denunciation of the unconscious motivations behind acting 'nobly' and making justice in a corrupt and swampy academic milieu, and for Mikko Mikkilä's *An Unfinished Piece for a Mechanical Piano*. Based on a very early Chekhov play, *Platonov*, the name of its main character. For the Polish Zdanowska can be used as a camouflage for self-betrayal, deviousness may in fact be evading rather than taking responsibility. *Compromise* is not a clear-cut grey, but mostly, and its boundaries diffuse.

In Chekhov's man-down country, village compromise is a way of life. The painful awakening, to self-betrayal as *Platonov*, now a school teacher, is confronted by his former love Sofia who thought him a Russian Byron, leads nowhere. She has settled for a top student, *Accomplices* and one yearning but erotic another as passion. The inevitable doctor puts off his emergency call for the warmth of merry company. When the servants bring a gag to be ridden around the house, no one knows what to do with it: the joke is no longer on. When the courage is ready for him to leave after finding his wife loses another, Sofia's husband falls asleep as it. Nothing changes, but the humor in the shyness of it all is unshakable in the film, it is the best adult Chekhov I have seen either on stage or screen (Alexander Kalyagin as *Platonov* is brilliant).

The week showed intelligent program ming of films that allowed for comparison of style or theme. There were notably no in films than usual by women directors: those of them Scandinavian, Norwegian *Aps Brenes* (Hvis) disappointed this year with heavy-handed treatment of *Games of Love* and *Emotions* based on Swedish writer Hjalmar Soderberg. 14, five years ago *Min Zerstörung* showed in her *De Glasse* that, with a greater sense of irony and humor, the scoring breakdown of the same author's dialogue can work. There is a certain cultural element of non-verbal communication and wooden movement



Craig Russell from *Choreography*

that often render Scandinavian film production (as also with Japanese motion films) as far somewhat simplistic but very competent debut. Or, Lasse Mikkilä's controls this quality and uses it to advantage in focusing on a young couple helpless in a national crisis.

Günar Lundblom's *Paradise Place* is perpled with articulate characters who can visualize their emotions. It is the social outsiders, King and his mother, who cannot. Despite an bleak outcome and social coercion, there is no gladdening tidings. It brings a personal approach to the problems of caring in a world of events that insensibility. The theme of friendship between two older women, with professional interests in common is not only rare in film, but here explored with the dramatic skill of a woman who has given Ingemar Bergman's films some of their strongest performances.

The concern with an unspeakable message outside of *Paradise Place* is echoed in an unusual Swiss film that followed it, *The Indians Are Still Far Away*, by Patricia Moraz. A film that gives us an in-terrogator partly through the expressive performance of Isabelle Huppert, who projects acute sensitivity and blooded despair through minimal expression in an environment of war and boredom. Often dwelling on long shots where little more is happen, it reconstructs the non-verbal of a week preceding the girl's suicide. Similarly, in *Story of a Lower School Shaded Saloon* allows such after the time it needs to record the isolation and inability to communicate of his autobiographical, as he reconstructs the routine of the week after the man's girlfriend disappears, until her body is found under his bed.

For film makers concerned with social

documentation and with self-reflexivity in film-making, attempted through film on film making, perhaps the most significant of all was Richard Hauff's *The Main Actor*, a film prompted by his previous *Paula Paschauer*, in which an actual father and son act out their real life conflicts on their poor terms. *The Main Actor* begins with the end of such a filming session; the focus is on conflict between the capturing filmmaker, fascinated by the overt expression of aggression in a social class other than his own, and the boy. Unwittingly a star exposed to the interesting power of the film medium, he is incapable of again submitting to his dominating father. As in many of the week's films, the dilemma is unresolved. It is an important film here where commercial film an Aboriginal theme also seeks out tribal or outcast values.

After so many films with an obvious and dependent message, films that reject the thematic meaning effects of cinema in order to find a more single on contemporary reality, *Black and White in Color* provided a welcome change of pace. It makes its strong point about colorism, the corrupting effect of power and the shyness of war through caricature and satire and is a very impressive debut by Jean-Jacques Annaud, made in the Ivory Coast.

Judging by vocal response, the popular favorite of a Sydney audience with a penchant for style was *Choreography*, a Canadian feature debut by Richard Benoit, perhaps a much needed relief after a week of nerds and blooded emotion. Incredibly entertaining, mainly due to Craig Russell's brilliant female impersonations, its message of loving care as pure art and 'Let's be mad and happy together' is somewhat tritely and facile.



Bernard Herrmann: The Composer as Mimic.



The disc entitled *The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann* (Discs, reissued World Accord Club # 04437) enables us to listen to excerpts from the scores of three films in which Herrmann's music was inseparably linked with the mastery of Ray Harryhausen in creating giants, monsters and other special effects. In the music for *Mysterious Island* Herrmann sets his large orchestra bounding to the motion of a giant balloon, evokes the nightmare sharpness of getting off a great crab, engages in comprehensive bounding for a giant bee and ends an 18th century lagoon through grotesquely amplified and distorted surfaces to accompany the appearance of an enormous bad Chinese staff, you may say. Perhaps, but Herrmann brings to his musical characterization highly developed technical skill and an awareness of what has happened and what is possible in music compulsively run among film composers. The 18th century lagoon is said to be by a pupil of Bach, J.C. Koels. As Koels means crab in German it might have been even more fitting if his lagoon had been appropriated for the appearance of the giant crab, but we can't have everything. The sinking thing about the grotesqueness of Herrmann's music for *Mysterious Island* is how much more satisfying they are than the excerpts taken from another Harryhausen-Herrmann collaboration, *Jaws*, and the *Apogean*. There is a certain still broader membership to the music accompanying the *Man of Bronze*, but the Triton who runs from the depths of the sea and hurls back the clashing rocks in order to let the Apollo through has not had a great deal of imagination put into his music. Writing music for monsters needs technique, which Herrmann has in plenty, but it obviously helps if the monsters have some additional visual characterization. If the Triton had had a lamp, for example, I am inclined to think that Herrmann would have found a more interesting musical expression for him. It is not discreditable to Herrmann that his

music is memory and that the more grotesque and nightmare the image the better the memory and that the more grotesque and nightmare the image the better the memory and the music. Herrmann's solution to the ultimate problem of writing music for *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* (on the other side of this disc) is to mimic and, on occasion, playfully distort the characteristic poses and turns of phrase of major English composers of the 18th century. A sturdy mimic is identified with Gulliver's home town of Wapping. The Lilliputians are accompanied by music scored with airy lightness and fragility of texture. The 18th century touches are mildly satirizing, and it is hardly fair to Herrmann to point out that they are unconvincingly satirical as well as closer to Stravinsky's mauling of 18th century themes and conventions in *Pulcinella*. I doubt whether the music for *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* has an essence truly independent of the film, despite its unusual formal shapelessness. The two movements in which Herrmann seems to speak really as a composer are, significantly, concerned with monsters: gigantic characters and the pursuit by the Broomstick-giants. Anyone who has an affectionate memory of these films and who already admires the scope of Herrmann's work as a film composer will probably enjoy this disc, all the more so as the music for it was easily recorded by the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Herrmann's own expert direction.

The question lurking to the back of many listeners' minds when they encounter the film music of a composer like Herrmann whose technique is consistently professional and whose general culture is wide enough to go something like this: what sort of music would he write if there were no films to go with it? Herrmann stands up to such an enquiry better than most composers who have written consistently for film. He had already written a number of his best concert works at the time that he began composing for

film and the impulse to compose such works went on for at least a time after his film career began. His *Symphony II* (side 1) was it is his only *opus* dated from 1941. He had made his first appearance as a composer for feature films a year earlier, very successfully, with the score for Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (There are two discs at least of this music, one a United Artists record of the original soundtrack and one recently recorded by the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Gerhardt for RCA). Herrmann went on to work with, among others, Truffaut and Hitchcock. His association with Hitchcock was especially long and memorable. There is a record devoted to his music for *Peyton at the University*, newly played under the composer's direction, and a *Score* recording brings together excerpts from Herrmann's music for five Hitchcock thrillers: *Psycho*, *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Vertigo* and (in a recording dedicated to Hitchcock himself) *The Trouble with Harry*. The *Psycho* score was for many alone. Herrmann wrote for them most effectively in the last occasional style of many of Stravinsky's compositions for string. Note that I am only saying that Herrmann borrowed a style and made it seem appropriate to his subject matter, not that he was imitating or plagiarizing. (The borrowing from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* to be found in the music for *Jaws*, in contrast, seems to me much closer to a straight pinch.) I think Herrmann may be most at ease in his mastery of a style as clearly defined as neo-classic Stravinsky. In the *Symphony*, left to his own devices, Herrmann shows less consistency of style or personality. Yet the *Symphony* has nothing about it of the crude explicit sub of a composer who only comes into relation to a screen image.

The above notes without further. Even if that comparison can be sustained with any exactness only in brief passages of the score the *Symphony* (Discs, reissued World Accord Club #04437) does have the tone of *opus* or *opus*. Herrmann clearly had a great impulse to musical expression even if he needed the specific references of a film or of other kinds of dramatic work (such as his opera *Werther*, *Angkor* or his dramatic cantata *Maia*). Did he order to give that impulse memorable definition. The *Symphony* has scale sweep and some good ideas. I am inclined to think that the most successful movement is the most nightmareish: a substance which is like a relative heart and which drives part of its impact from a grotesque variant on the scherzo of Beethoven's seventh symphony. It is Beethoven with a leap and a handback. Herrmann's characteristic, the music, but, equally characteristically, needs something grotesque to bring out the best in his mastery.



Play texts not the proper basis for theatre?

Gambit 32 "Three Theatre Manifestos" by Steven Berkoff
Fight for Justice by Peter Chessman, Mathews
The Cake Man by Robert Merritt, Corrorey Press
 Plays published by Methuen, Calder and Penguin

Whatever the actors do becomes the play — it still doesn't meet the mark, what is a good way of making plays? One answer is, undoubtedly, Berkoff's way. He is a theatrical actor who, far from demonstrating the primacy of the actor, demonstrates the primacy of Berkoff. As actor, author and director he creates performances as a single artist, whatever collaborative creative effort he may get from his company.

For illustration we have the amazing fact that his text, *Misawakenings*, reads superbly. This is partly because it evokes Kafka's story, and partly because it is a description of a production rather than a prescription for one as yet uninitiated in deference to the Aristotelian view, referred to by Berkoff, that playtexts are not the proper basis for the theatre. I can say no more, other than that life will seem empty until I see his production of this great story at Marnoo later this year.

The script of *Fight for Justice* by Chessman (Methuen) is even more uncompromisingly a record of production, not at all for the director. It is the annotated text of one of the documentary productions of the Victoria Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, under the direction of Peter Chessman. It deals with the threat to close down the Stoke steel works, and the struggle of the local work force to prevent it. Again we have the problem that Peter Chessman is well known as the leader of the company but in this case there does seem to have been genuine creative collaboration. Chessman is usually anonymous, "the words you are about to read were not written by me, or by the actors, but by the men and women who work at Stoke's Steelworks, and some of the workers' wives".

This volume is falling so far behind in covering the books reviewed by *Theatre Australia* that a great number must be done at once. This is just as well, as the rest of these books look suspiciously to me like playscripts, by playwrights in Australia, on the whole, theatre still operates on the basis of a handful of artistic directors choosing playscripts to produce, but those people will no doubt have already made their decisions on these plays, so all I can do is present them for the consideration of potential readers.

These plays, then, also run.

The Cake Man by Robert I. Merritt (Corrorey Press) is a study of the lives of aborigines in a NSW country town. It has obvious political intent, but its low-key, generally naturalistic style, while very moving, seems to preclude its having much political impact. (As an ironic footnote to the comment, above I admit that the memory of Justice Saunders' fine performance as Billy in the original production contributes a lot to reading the play.) Howard Bevison's *Epique Down* (Methuen) is yet another reminder of how much we could learn from this great

playwright. Like Sami Kadi's *A Mad World* My Mother (Methuen) it was originally performed by the Joint Stock Theatre Group and is a comic pageant of English life. New plays which deserve much more attention than I can give them here are Howard Barker's *Sleepwalkers* and *Class* (Calder Playscript 79) and Alan Brown's *Wheelchair Fiddle* (Calder Playscript 80). In Mathews's *Master Playwrights* series we have *Play One* of Edward Bond, which contains *Saved*, *Early Morning* and *The Pope's Wedding*.

Finally there are the "why not?" plays. I cannot think of any reason why the following plays should not have been published: Michael Pogo's *Clouds* (Methuen) and *Alphabetic Order*, and Douglas Fenn's (Methuen), and David Merritt's television scripts, *Fluffy Bear* and other plays are all very funny. Penguin's volume of *Three Plays* (White Hall's *The Long and The Short and The Tall*, Michael Hastings' *Pin and After* and Doris Lessing's *Jack Ma Own Wilderness*) is worth getting if only for an unexpected page 154. Harley Glanville Barker's *The Madman House* was written last year at the National so we can expect to see it at the OAG soon.

Except for *The Cake Man* all these plays are English.

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gambit
 THE ORIGINAL



32

Does theatre have a single creator, or is the way poetry and painting have? It is obviously a collaborative activity (like building a monument or performing a symphony) but should it have a single guiding "artist"? All the best known actor-centred companies on modern Western theatre are closely identified with a leader/director — Jerry Gotowski, John Boek and Judith Malina, Joseph Chaikin, Joan Littlewood and, now in this country, Steven Berkoff. After all the battles this century with loans and directors we are heading back to the relationship of the leading actor — albeit justified on the democratic sounding grounds that the company of actors, being "up front", are the collaborative true creators of the performance.

Steven Berkoff, in the first of his "Three Theatre Manifestos" in *Gambit 32* (which also includes the text of his *Misawakenings*) after Kafka claims that the actor "is more interesting than the text" and that the playwright, "like a producer, seeks for two things to give form, blood heat, flesh and interpretation to his greedy thoughts". Like Gotowski, Berkoff appeals to the argument that the actor can exist without the play but not the play without the actor. This begs the question,

CUE

A.C.T.

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Winter the flesh adapted by the company from old works of A. A. Milne. Schools season 21 to 28 August. Public season 28 August - 9 September

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The Assassination by David Williamson, director: Michael Rolfe. In repertory with *William* - Linda Hunt by Thomas Kennedy, director: Steve Agnew. 16 August 23
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, director: Michael Rolfe. From August 25

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (21 5411)

While the Billy Bobs - Henry Lawson's stories by Leonard Tait. August 14 - Murrumbidgee August 12 - Queanbeyan August 16 - Tamworth August 27 - Armidale August 18 - Glen Davis August 19 - Brewarrilla, New South Wales

School tours: Bowral High School North Coast tour throughout August

State Woodward Road Project Workshop North West NSW tour August 7-23

Site of Sex - contemporary sculpture, general Sydney Metropolitan area from August 5
Wayne Robert Brown, painter North Coast and Riverina (tour throughout August)

After Hours - folk songs, pianist North Coast and Hunter area tour, to August 25

Awaken - a children's play written and directed by Tony Wright. Sydney Metropolitan area tour to August 26

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (26 2096)

Normed by Bellini August 1, 9, 16, 23, 26
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Le Nozze di Figaro August 21, 24, 26

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (42 8777)

Spoken by Stewart Parker, director: Don Rod (continuous)

FRANK STRAITS BULL N BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (31 4637)

Allego of Tomorrow with Noel Hughes, Keith Dorell, Julie Patterson, Noel Bryant and Alan Norman. Director: Frank Straits (Choreographed by George Cardon (continuous))

GENESIAN THEATRE (87 8213)

The Starboard Side by Paul Simon, director: Corale Butler. To September 9

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (112 4411)

Dracula directed by Sir Robert Helpmann, starring John Waters. From August 18

JANE KEEFE THEATRE (44 3119)

As You Like It by William Shakespeare, Director: Aubrey Miller. July 26, Aug 19

KIRK GALLERY (44 1794)

Lovers by Brian Friel, director: Vincent Kelly, producer: Stephen Haggrove. From August 10

MADMAN STREET (44 3164)

Church Mole by Fow Can adapted from the French by Jack Womack and Walter Gillet, director: Robert Lewis. To September 29

MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (27 1434)

The Magic Tinker Box and St George and the Dragon with a special appearance of Bill Shakespeare performed by the National Marionette Puppets. From August 29

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MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (77 4470)

Present a musical revue starring the Topanga Family and Lili Young (continuous)

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Philo, The Phenomenon by Kevin Morgan, director: John Armstrong. To August 18
Reviewed by Michael Coughlin. Director: Kevin Jackson (continuous)

NIMROD THEATRE (44 9001)

Waters of by William Shakespeare, Director: Richard Wherrett with John Bell, Frank Wilson and Alexander Hay. To August 12
Monoproductions by Frank Kafka, adapted and directed by Steven Berkoff. With Ralph Coleman Group/Servicio. Paul Brennan, Richard Collins and Margaret Cameron. From August 29

OLD TONE (44 4122)

Bruma Theatre: May Fever. By Noel Coward, Director: Ted Craig. With Patricia Kennedy, David Northman, Ian Hamilton, John Wernock, Ronald Falk, Suzanne Reynolds. Barry Otto, Judy Ryan and Conno Hobbs. From August 5
Parade Theatre: The Artist on How to Get up by Anne Johnson, Director: Peter Collingwood, with Glenn Deedick, Robert Hughes, Geoff Kelen and Colin de Burgh. From August 6

PARIS THEATRE (81 9193)

The Firm Company in *Parade* Cross by Dorothy Hewson, music: Ralph Threlkeld, lighting by David Reed. Director: Ian Thomson. To end of August

Flames by Louis Nemes. Director: Rex Cosgrove. From end of August

Q THEATRE. Penrith (44 21 2715)

What if Four Dead Quizzes by David Williamson. Director: Arthur Glick

August 2, 30. Penrith August 25, 27
Bathurst August 28, September 3
Penrith

RIVERINA TRUCKING COMPANY (44 21 2021)

Awake. Awake. Awake by Robert O'Brien. Director: Tony O'Connell. Designer: Paul Lynn. Musical director: Craig McLean. Last night performance of *Awake in Love* by Raymond Beckett. To August 4, 19

SEYMOUR CENTRE (44 8523)

York Theatre. Crown Memorial written by Roger Ayton, Director: Peter Williams, with Jane Sellen and John Hamilton. To September 9
Juno and Peter. Sydney. University Dramatic Society in *Hamlet* from Play by Ben Jonson. To August 5. Seymour Theatre in *Education* from 10 to 12. In the Play by Anne Harvey and Linda Butler. Link Store by David Campbell. August 31 only

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Brandy by Ian Tisdale. Written by Peter Symonds. Throughout August

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ARTS THEATRE (36 2244)

San Francisco Memorial Drama Festival. To August 5

Master on the Mob by Agatha Christie. Director: Peter Service. Designer: Lisa Haggrover

Children's Theatre. Photos of Childhood. Frank Cowie. A musical for children, written by David Ward. Director: Jay McKee. Saturdays 2.00 pm

HER MAJESTY'S (221 2775)

The Australian Ballet. Swan Lake with Dame Margot Fantasy. August 1, 3
Swan White and the Seven Dwarfs - August 12 to 26. 10.00. 8.15. 4.15 pm

LA ROUTE (18 1412)

The Father We Lived on a death in. Set by Steve Bower. Director: Jeremy Ridgeman. To August 12

Talk from the House. Words by Colin Van Heerde. Director: Rod Wooten. August 18 to September 16

Early Childhood Drama Project - Foreign - a play for children. August 1, 4, 8, 11 to 9.30 am and 11.00 am

Late Night. Director: Coffer by Ronan Wynn. Director: David Watson. August 4, 5, 10, 11

Mobile Sings performing at La Route. August 20, 24, 25, 30. 8.00 pm

director, Edgar Mitchell. To Aug 19
Galleries and Statues Society. *Passover*. Directed
John Mullan. From Aug 20
Grovehouse. *Memories of Love Well Done* by
Hesterhouse Williams. Directed: Stephen Barry

THE REGAL (81 1971)

David Williamson and Ben Carr. Director, Kenzie
Cramer. Aug 17. Sep 1

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THESPIA'S CROSSWORD

CLUES

Across:

1. Rolling waters might... (6)
2. There are when you next applied (8)
3. *White Bird* in *Merchandise* begins (5)
4. Pooping after a heavy night (5)
5. leap replaced gas (12)
6. "I can call spirits from the deep"
(Henry IV Pt I) (5)
7. The truth of a wish (8)
8. *The Smoak*, play and short story
by Aldous Huxley (8)
9. All the girls love a tender (4)
10. Playing with meat (1,3)
11. What do order Virgil and of women (5)
12. *Caution* in single stanza (8)
13. Scandalised William later loses unde-
fiable article in brocade covers (24)
14. "So do our measures to their end"
Shakespeare's *coroner* (8)

Down:

1. A devil wrong (4)
2. The type of performance *Stardust*
shows for (8)
3. *Slow* (6)
4. *St Andrew's* north shattering mistake
(3,7,24)
5. Are these ever leaving with *homer*? (8)
6. Shakespeare's archaic word for dark
continues (24)
7. Above the door on theatre (4,8)
8. Blatant make-up around (10)
9. Sweet burning encourage for queen
(5,4)
10. How the *Amulet* went to sea (2,1,5)
11. May have one *homer* and be open (5)
12. "..... should not be played in a house
with women in it" (*Shrewsbury*
Deceit) (5)
13. *Scorp*'d or full of *noises* (4)

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